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THE

CONTEMPORARIES OF BURNS,

AND THE

MORE RECENT POETS OF AYRSHIRE,

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM THEIR WRITINGS.

PUBLISHED BY
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P R E F A C E .

THE intervention of unforeseen circumstances has delayed the completion of the present volume considerably beyond the period contemplated; and the Editor is afraid that the abstraction of his attention, by other avocations, may have operated still more injuriously in detracting from the interest of the work. It remains, however, for the public to judge how far he has fallen short of expectation.

Whatever opinion may be pronounced by the critical world, one thing in connexion with his labours affords him the greatest satisfaction, and that is, the countenance and aid he has experienced in quarters where he least expected favour, while the numerous friendships they have been the means of forming, will ever be regarded as amongst the happiest circumstances of his life. He would have had much pleasure in acknowledging more directly the extent to which he has been indebted to his friends and contributors, but he does not feel that he would be warranted in doing so in every instance, and it would be invidious to particularize.

Well aware that his task has not been executed with all the industry and ability he could have wished, the Editor is fully sensible that the field over which he has travelled has not been assiduously gleaned; and he has to apologize for the omission of several names, both amongst the Contemporaries of Burns and the More Recent Poets of Ayrshire. Such omissions, however, are in some measure unavoidable in a work of this kind; but should a second edition be called for, ample opportunity will then be afforded of doing justice to all.

As it is, the Editor flatters himself that the undertaking has not been altogether fruitless; and, faulty as it may be in execution, he feels a degree of honest pride in having been the means of adding, however unworthily, to the stock of national biography.

The omission of the name of JOHN GALT, in a volume devoted to the poetical literature of Ayrshire, may appear somewhat unaccountable; but the explanation offered accords with the design of the work, which was chiefly intended to rescue the more humble and obscure votaries of the Muse from oblivion. The author of the "Ayrshire Legatees" is widely known to fame; and the principal events of his life are already before the world from his own pen.

Unwilling to occupy the time of the reader with needless preliminary matter, it may only be farther remarked, that in glancing over the following pages, one of the principal objects of the work should be steadily borne in mind: and that was, not only to give biogra-

phical sketches of the authors, but to present a varied and comprehensive selection from their writings. This became the more necessary, that many of the volumes, especially of the Contemporaries of Burns, are unknown to the generality of readers, and are not likely ever to have the honour of a reprint. The length of the poetical extracts, in some instances, which would otherwise have been improper, will thus appear fully warranted in the scope and spirit of the publication.

June 1840.

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INTRODUCTION.

THOUGH by no means deficient in men of genius and learning,* AYRSHIRE, prior to the days of BURNS, had little to boast of as a poetic region—no classic Tweed

* Among the early authors belonging to Ayrshire may be mentioned *Sir Hugh Montgomery* (the first Earl of Eglinton), a poet by reputation, though none of his works are extant—*Walter Kennedy*, a contemporary of Dunbar—*Alexander Montgomerie*, author of “The Cherry and the Slae”—*Rev. Zacharie Boyd*, Professor of Divinity in the College of Glasgow—*Mark Alexander Boyd*, some of whose pieces appear in the “*Deliciæ Poetarum Scotorum*”—*Sir William Moore*, of Rowallan, who wrote “The True Crucifix of the True Catholics”—*Andrew Michael Ramsay*, better known as the *Chevalier Ramsay*, whose poetical lucubrations were collected in a thin volume, small 4to, 1728, but who is now chiefly remembered for his once celebrated fiction, “The Travels of Cyrus,” &c. In the “Introductory Essay” to the “Harp of Renfrewshire,” the editor (Motherwell) hesitates not to rank both the above Montgomeries among the Poets of Renfrewshire, besides several other writers, regarding whom the claim of locality may be reasonably disputed. Alluding to Sir Hugh Montgomery, the editor says, “He was lineally descended from the Montgomeries of Eagleshame, the parent stock of all that name in Scotland, and is therefore justly entitled to be considered as a native of the county.” Upon the same principle Burns might be considered a native of Kincardineshire!! The essayist also claims for Renfrewshire the Earl of Glencairn, author of the satirical “Epistil, derectit from the holy Heremite of Allareit, to his brethren the Greye Freers,” and well-known as one of the Lords of the Congregation in the days of the Reformation. The Cunninghames of Kilmaurs, and afterwards of Glencairn, were one of the oldest families in Ayrshire. Their property was chiefly in that county, though latterly their principal residence was Finlayston House, in Renfrewshire; consequently Glencairn, according to Mr Motherwell’s logic, is therefore “justly entitled to be considered a native of Ayrshire.” Robert Crawford, (a cadet of the Auchinames family), author of the popular songs of “Tweedside,” “My dearie an’ ye die,” “The Bush aboon Traquair,” &c., is also claimed by the monopolizing essayist of Renfrewshire, though he ought unquestionably to be ranked among the Poets of Ayrshire. Auchinames is no doubt in Renfrewshire; but the mansion-house, as well as a great portion of the property belonging to the family, is in Ayrshire.

or Yarrow meandered through the plains of Kyle and Cunninghame; and, with the exception of “Hardyknute,” and “Johnnie Faa,” almost none of our popular ballads had reference to the county.

“ Ramsay and famous Fergusson,
Gied Forth an’ Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow an’ Tweed to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irvine, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
Nae body sings.”

The genius of the rustic Bard, however, whose lines we have just quoted, has invested the place of his nativity with a new character—“Auld Ayr, wham ne’er a town surpasses,” the Cottage where he was born, the “Braes o’ bonnie Doon,” and, in short, every spot where he has been known to stray, “by fancy led,” have become objects of deep interest to all who undertake a pilgrimage to the “Land of Burns.” Nor has care been wanting to render these worthy of his memory. The handsome monument erected in the vicinity of “Allowa’s auld haunted Kirk,” in 1820, has since then been vastly improved; and the grounds in the neighbourhood are laid off and decorated in a style admirably in keeping with the simple grandeur of the surrounding scenery.*

* These improvements have been chiefly effected through the instrumentality of Mr David Auld, at one time a perfumer in Ayr. When George IV. visited Edinburgh, he presented his Majesty with a chair, antiquely formed of wood from the roof of Allowa Kirk, and ornamented with scenes from the tale of *Tam o’ Shanter*, painted by Stevens, an artist belonging to Ayr (now in Rome), who has attained considerable eminence in his profession. Mr Auld was the patron of Thom, the self-taught sculptor, who some years ago astonished the public by the productions of his chissel. He employed the artist to cut the figures of Tam o’ Shanter and Souter Johnnie, and afterwards shared with him the profits of the tour taken through Great Britain to show those pieces of sculpture, by which arrangement, it is said, he gained £2000. Thom is now in America.

Amid the world of fame acquired by the Peasant Bard, and while men of all ranks and opinions unite in admiration of his genius, and in contributing to honour the district that gave him birth, it is rather surprising that so little interest has hitherto been manifested in the history of those individuals who appeared contemporaneously with the Poet, or have since sought inspiration at his shrine. "The fame which Burns obtained," says Cunningham, "deluged the Lowlands of Scotland with rustic verse; and I have heard men, who had the reputation of good sense, express surprise at their want of success. They did not observe that those homely bards wanted almost all for which Burns was distinguished." This is a sweeping, and, to a certain extent, a true assertion. Few of these votaries of the muse, indeed, have established any paramount claim to distinction; yet, it is worthy of remark, that the efforts even of her most humble followers, exerted, as they frequently are, in distant and widely scattered districts, are not without their influence in advancing the progress of intellectual improvement—and hence his title to the sympathy of posterity.

How many, in the words of David Sillar, have

" Ever had an anxious wish—
 Forgive me, Heaven! if 'twas amiss—
 That fame in life my name wad bliss,
 And kindly save
 It from the cruel Tyrant's crush,
 Beyond the grave"—

and, like him, might have wished in vain, but for some fortuitous circumstance that has procured for them a niche in the "temple of fame." As the early bosom friend of Burns, the memory of David Sillar, independent of his pretensions as a poet, must ever be regarded

with peculiar respect; and well might the future admirers of Coila's Bard regret, should no additional reminiscences be preserved of such men as the "brither poet," or of the "bauld Lapraik," than what has already been recorded. As time recedes curiosity will be whetted; and who were the "Contemporaries of Burns?" may be asked at a period when it would be impossible to answer the question satisfactorily.*

"It is affecting to think," is the observation of Cromek, in allusion to the authors of many of our best lyrics, "that they lie below the turf, and all that can now be redeemed from the oblivious wreck of their genius, is a few solitary fragments of song!" This is a reproach less likely to apply to the present age; but we are still too apt to lose sight of unobtrusive merit. There are few individuals, however undistinguished, whose history is not in some degree pregnant with instruction; and, apart from considerations of utility, there is a pleasure to be experienced in tracing the obscure path of him to whom the fountains of knowledge have been only partially opened; and who, struggling in vain to wing his flight against the full "blaze of day," has nevertheless become the centre and the luminary of his own admiring though limited circle. With all the feelings of the poet, he may have failed in clothing his sentiments in correct or glowing language; but how many hearts are capable of vibrating to the deepest and purest emotions, and yet, like the Æolian harp, when swept by the passing breeze, have not the faculty of giving

* It is to be presumed that the work, now issuing from the press, entitled "The Land of Burns," will supply the desideratum, in so far as the immediate correspondents of Burns are concerned; but the present undertaking will be found to embrace objects, and to enter into details, altogether foreign to the design of that elegant, but necessarily circumscribed publication.

distinct and impressive utterance to their sensations.
The flower that is

—————“ born to blush unscen,
And waste its sweetness in the desert air,”

may, indeed, lose a portion of its perfume in the transplanting, but who would choose that it should rather perish in the solitude?

The Poets of Ayrshire, since the days of Burns, however, are not all of the very humble class we have been alluding to. Amongst others, the late Sir Alexander Boswell may be instanced; and, though more of a novelist than a poet, it must not be forgotten that Galt is a native of the county*—and the scene of one of his earliest and best productions, the “Annals of the Parish,” is understood to be the burgh which gave him birth. But the world does not need to be told of such men as the author of “Lawrie Todd,” and we shall have more delight in rescuing the obscure from oblivion, or in leading forward those whose unfledged wings give promise of future strength of flight. With Southey’s “Lives of the Uneducated Poets of England” before us, need we apologize for extending a friendly hand to the unlettered, as well as to the better educated, who claim to be enrolled among the songsters of the “Land of Burns?”

* So is the Poet James Montgomerie. He was the eldest son of a Moravian minister, and born in Irvine on the 4th November 1771. His parents, however, were from Ireland; and as they returned to that country a few years after the birth of the bard, we scarcely feel warranted in claiming, from the mere accident of birth, the honour of a name which virtually belongs to the Sister Isle.

THE

CONTEMPORARIES OF BURNS.



JOHN LAPRAIK,

THE BARD OF MUIRKIRK.

THE name of Lapraik is familiar to every reader of Burns ; yet comparatively few know any thing of his writings, his history, or his family. The surname—now very rare in this country—is perhaps of French origin. The family of Lekprevick, or Lapraik, of that Ilk, made a considerable figure “ before the reign of Robert the Bruce, and continued to flourish a long time after.”* The Castle of Lekprevick, now in ruins, is about a mile and a half south from Kilbride, in the county of Lanark. Robert Lekprevick was printer to James the Sixth of Scotland. He it was who first gave to the world a collected edition of the Scottish Statutes. Another production of his press is “ The Actis and Deides of the illuster and vailyeand champion Schir William Wallace, of Ellerslie, imprintit at Edenburgh by Robert Lekprevick, at the expensis of Henrie Charteris ; and are to be sauld in his buith, on the north side of the gait above the throne. Black letter, 4to. Anno Do. M.D.LXX.” The only copy known to exist of this very rare edition of a popular work is in the British Museum. “ The Sege of the Castel of Edenburgh” was also “ imprintit be Robert Lekprevick, anno 1573.” Whether or not the subject of this sketch was a descendant of the printer does not appear ; nor is it known whether he was in any way connected with the ancient stock, although the scarcity now-a-days of persons of the same name makes such a presumption extremely probable.

JOHN LAPRAIK, the senior of all the Ayrshire contemporaries of

* Ure's Rutherglen and East Kilbride. Glasgow, 1793, 8vo. Pp. 163.

Burns, was born in 1727, at Laigh Dalquhram, (or, as now pronounced, Dalfram,) situated on the road to Sorn, about three miles west of Muirkirk. Here his father lived before him, and the property had been in possession of the family for several generations. He was the eldest son, and, by the death of his father, succeeded at an early period to the paternal inheritance. His education, though equal, if not superior, to the common range of parochial instruction at that period, was by no means classical; and, as observed by himself, he had little leisure to improve his mind by extensive reading. At what period he first attempted verse it is impossible to guess; but it must have been long prior to the attempts of his youthful friend—the inimitable Bard of Coila.

Lapraik married in March 1754. He had then attained his twenty-seventh year. The object of his choice was Margaret Rankin, eldest daughter of William Rankin of Lochhead, and sister to John, the well-known “rough, rude, ready-witted Rankin.” From a document (the contract of marriage*) in our possession, it appears that he received with his bride a dowery of one hundred pounds sterling; and that, in case of his demise, under certain contingences, she was to obtain an annuity of two hundred merks Scots. His property, at this period, consisted, in the words of the document, of “All and hail that eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Dalquhram, alias Nether Dalquhram; and all and hail the eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Upper Dalquhram, commonly called Laigh Hall; as also all and hail the eight shilling ninepenny land of old extent of Dalquhram, called Douglass Dalquhram, with the respective houses, biggings, yeards, parts, and pendicles, and hail pertinents of the said several lands and teinds, parsonage and vinerage of the same, all lying within the parish of Muirkirk, lordship and late regality, now barony of Kylesmuir, and sheriffdom of Ayr, together with the fishing of salmond and other fishing in the water of Ayr.” Besides the lands enumerated, which

* To this document, in addition to the signatures of the contracting parties, (viz. John Lapraik, William Rankin, and Margaret Rankin,) is also appended that of the well-known John Rankin, as one of the witnesses. In respect to penmanship, Lapraik’s is decidedly the best.

appear to have been considerable, Lapraik held in lease the ground and mill of Muirsmill, distant from Dalfram about half a mile; and for some years subsequent to his marriage he enjoyed with his "wedded wife" that degree of happiness which competence and affection were so well calculated to afford. Possessed of a cheerful, kind disposition, few men were more beloved in his sphere, or better fitted for the reciprocal interchange of social life. Fond of poetry and song, he essayed the rustic lyre; and happy in his household, its strings were alone attuned for the domestic hearth. Little did he dream that the muse thus wooed in prosperity, should, at no distant period, become the solace of his misfortune!

Among the earliest of the Poet's griefs was the death of his wife, soon after the birth of her fifth child.* This was indeed a severe stroke, and not less keenly felt. The blank in the domestic circle was supplied, however, a few years afterwards (1766), in the person of Janet Anderson, of Lightshaw, the name of a neighbouring farm possessed by her father. Janet was fourteen years his junior, and a young woman in every respect capable of inspiring the Poet with the most ardent affection:—

"Ye gods! who reside in the regions above,
Deprive me of life, or inspire *her* with *love*!
Make Jenny's fond bosom to feel for my pain,
That I may sweet peace and contentment regain."

The gods were propitious—

"She smiled sweetly on me, and gave me her hand,
And with blushes did own she was at my command;
Transported with joy, while she lean'd on my breast,
I thanked the kind gods who had heard my request:
So I to all sorrows and cares bid farewell,
While Jenny does love me, no care I can feel."

When Lapraik thus expressed himself, he was secure in his property of Dalfram, and though not a wealthy laird, could scarcely have imagined that the day of adversity was so near at hand.

In November 1769, about four years after the consummation

* Three of the five children reached the years of maturity. One of the sons died abroad, the other, William, at Woolwich.

of his second marriage, the Ayr Bank was established, under the designation of Douglas, Heron & Co., with a capital of £150,000; and, numbering among its shareholders some of the most wealthy and influential men in the country, the concern began business under the happiest auspices, and with the fairest prospects of success. Its career, however, was short, and its effects ruinous. In the history of banking scarcely an instance is to be found of greater mismanagement. In little more than two years the company was under the necessity of suspending payments (June 1772); and though a farther advance was at that time obtained from the proprietors, the bank finally closed its transactions on the 12th of August 1773, having thus scarcely completed three full years from the date of its commencement. Many families of Ayrshire were buried in the fall of Douglas, Heron & Co.; and among these unhappily was the laird of Dalfram. "In an evil hour," says Cunningham, "when the love of making 'meikle mair' came upon him, he *purchased shares* in what Burns called 'that villainous bubble the Ayr bank,' and was involved in its ruin." Though true in the main particular, this is not altogether a correct statement. Lapraik, we believe, never was a shareholder;* but what was equally ruinous, he became a victim to the mania for speculation created by the lavish credits of the bank. He not only obtained discounts himself, but guaranteed others to a heavy amount; and when the "bubble burst" he found himself involved beyond the possibility of extrication. A poem, written apparently at this juncture, or shortly afterwards, embodies the author's sentiments, somewhat quaintly expressed, relative to the Douglas and Heron Bank, and the wide-spread ruin occasioned by its fall:—

" In the year sixty-nine and seventy,
Notes amongst us were too plenty :
 We took our glass and were right canty ;
 And little thought,
 That plenty, when 'tis misimproven,
 Brings men to nought.

* A list of the shareholders of the bank, which we doubt not may be interesting to our Ayrshire friends, will be given in a subsequent part of the work.

The cry went through from ' pole to pole,'
 There's credit here for ever soul ;
 If he's well back'd, without control,
 He shall have money :
 'Tis bitter sauce to each one now,
 That then was honey.

This credit went o'er all the country ;
 It was as ready as *King's bounty* ;
 But now there is not one of twenty
 That can get rest ;
Hornings are going every day,
 They're so opprest.

If I might pick some men by name,
 Wha did contrive a decent *scheme* :
 They're foolish folk wha these men blame ;
 For their intention
 Was to make ev'ry *crown* a *pound*
 By this invention.

In midst of their industrious plan,
 Their money is required again :
 He now is sad wha then was fain ;
 The secret's kent ;
 His profits he has not got in,
 And money's spent.

And then ilk creditor he has
 Comes runnin' on him wi' a blaze ;
 Each telling that he must have his
 Or caution get ;
 Then diligence against him goes ;
 Syne he's laid flat !"

* * *

The mismanagement on the part of the company chiefly existed in the lavish manner in which their notes were thrown into circulation, and the granting of loans on long credits, whereby the capital was withdrawn from the immediate use of the bank. This evil, proceeding partly from ignorance, was augmented by the circumstance of a number of adventurers having found their way into the directorship, who, at once needy and imprudent, set at defiance all the regulations of the establishment.* The result

* This was particularly the case at the office in Ayr. The Report of a Committee of Inquiry, published in 1778, states that "at Air, which was the principal office, and

was the speedy dissipation of the company's funds—the contraction of an equivalent debt, especially in London, to meet the return of their own notes—and a commercial panic occurring at the time, the money market suddenly became depressed, and all who were struggling for existence were speedily overwhelmed. At this crisis the desperate efforts made by the sale of redeemable annuities plunged the company into still farther difficulties; and the attempt to save the concern from *legal* bankruptcy ended a few months afterwards in a *voluntary* one, the evils of which were considerably augmented by the very means adopted to avoid such

where the business commenced the 6th of November 1769, it was unfortunate that a variety of enterprising companies, engaged in different kinds of foreign and domestic trade, had, about this time, been established in that place, under different firms indeed, but all of them closely connected and linked together; and that the members which composed these several trading companies became all of them partners of Douglas, Heron and Company. It was still more unfortunate, that the cashier and most of the directors, chosen for the management of the Air office, were deeply connected with, and concerned in, one or more of these trading companies; and thus the wise and salutary regulation of the general meeting, November 1769, prohibiting above one member of any trading company from being in the direction at any of the offices at one and the same time, was disregarded in the very first proceeding. Such were the companies under the firms of Oliphant and Company—Whiteside and Company—Maclure and Macree—Campbell and Company—Montgomery and Company—Campbell, Crawford and Company, and some others. The same connections, and, in general, the same individuals, composed those trading societies. They were a set of the partners of Douglas, Heron and Company, associated together; and four or five of the chief acting directors of this office were deeply engaged in those commercial schemes. The common desire and necessity of promoting mutual credit could not fail to unite this confederacy in the closest manner; and the access to credit being rendered easy, the consequences were such as might have been expected.—Most exorbitant and profuse credits were immediately given out, in various forms, to the individual members of those trading companies, and to the companies themselves, under their respective firms.—The same set of people became securities for each other; and, in the granting of cash-accounts in particular, this abuse immediately became so great with respect to the *Board of Directors*, and was so evidently inconsistent with the proper rules of management, that, so early as the 20th November 1769, a regulation was made, ‘That none of the directors who had already been bound should afterwards be received as securities in any cash-account;’ and thereafter, on the 8th of January 1770, the abuse having been complained of by the other offices, it was further resolved, ‘That no person whatever should be received as cautioner in more than three cash-accounts.’” These resolutions, however, had little effect, the mismanagement they were intended to check continuing, according to the Report, nearly to an equal extent. Besides the office at Ayr, there was one in Edinburgh and another in Dumfries.

an alternative.* It now became a matter of necessity, on the part of the company, to realize every available debt; hence the *hornings* and *diligence* alluded to by Lapraik.

In consequence of approaching difficulties, the Poet let his own lands of Dalfram, and retired to Muirsmill, where he remained for a few years. From thence he removed to Netherwood, a farm on the water of Greenoak, still retaining the lease of the mill, however; and here he continued for nine years, struggling in vain to overcome the losses he had sustained. At the end of that period he sold off his property, and again returned to Muirsmill; but the sale of his lands having failed to rid him of his liabilities, he still found himself the victim of legal prosecution, and at length, to heap the full measure of wretchedness on the devoted head of an unfortunate but honest man, he was thrown into prison. In his preface to his book of poems, Lapraik alludes to this event in the following words:—"In consequence of misfortunes and disappointments, he (the author) was, some years ago, torn from his ordinary way of life, and shut up in retirement, which he found at first painful and disagreeable. Imagining, however, that he had a kind of turn for rhyming, in order to support his solitude, he set himself to compose the following pieces," &c. While immured within the walls of Ayr jail, he is said to have written the very feeling lyric, "When I upon thy bosom lean," addressed to his wife:—

" When I upon thy bosom lean,
 Enraptured I do call thee mine;
 I glory in those sacred ties
 That made us one who once were twain:
 A mutual flame inspires us both—
 The tender look, the melting kiss;

* At the stoppage in June 1772, the debts due to the three bank offices amounted to nearly £700,000, £400,000 of which had been contracted by the partners themselves. The whole amount of assets, including debts and bills of exchange, amounted to £1,237,043. 7s. 1d. The debts due by the company exceeded this sum. In 1789, the committee appointed to wind up the affairs of the bank, found it necessary to make a fresh call of £1400 per share upon those partners who still continued solvent. From the state of affairs at this time, it appeared that after deducting the debts due to the company, the firm remained debtor in the sum of £366,000! The whole loss upon each share was calculated to amount to £2600, exclusive of interest.

Even years shall ne'er destroy our love—
Some sweet sensation new will rise.

Have I a wish ? 'tis all for thee ;
I know thy wish is me to please ;
Our moments pass so smooth away,
That numbers on us look and gaze.
Well pleased to see our happy days,
They bid us live and still love on ;
And if some cares shall chance to rise,
Thy bosom still shall be my home.

I'll lull me there and take my rest ;
And if that ought disturb my fair,
I'll bid her laugh her cares all out,
And beg her not to drop a tear.
Have I a joy ? 'tis all her own ;
Her heart and mine are all the same ;
They're like the woodbine round the tree,
That's twined till death shall us disjoin.*

* This song appeared in Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, with more of a Scottish dress and considerably improved, we should suppose, by the hand of Burns. The above is copied verbatim from Lapraik's volume. The other version is as follows :—

“ When I upon thy bosom lean,
And fondly clasp thee a' my ain,
I glory in the sacred ties
That made us ane, wha ance were twain :
A mutual flame inspires us baith—
The tender look, the melting kiss ;
Even years shall ne'er destroy our love,
But only gie us change o' bliss.

Have I a wish ? its a' for thee ;
I ken thy wish is me to please ;
Our moments pass sae smooth away,
That numbers on us look and gaze.
Weel pleas'd they see our happy days,
Nor envy's sel' finds aught to blame ;
And aye when weary cares arise,
Thy bosom still shall be my hame.

I'll lay me there, and tak' my rest ;
And if that aught disturb my dear,
I'll bid her laugh her cares away,
And beg her not to drap a tear.

It was this song, first heard at a country *rockin'*, that induced Burns to open a correspondence with the author, which he did in his "Epistle to J. Lapraik, an Old Scottish Bard," dated 1st April 1785:—

“ On fasten-een we had a rockin,
 To ca' the crack and weave our stockin,
 An' there was muckle fun an' jokin,
 Ye needna doubt ;
 At length we had a hearty yokin
 At *sang* about.

There was ae *sang* among the rest,
 Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
 That some kind husband had address
 To some sweet wife ;
 It thirl'd the heart-strings through the breast,
 A' to the life.”

The epistles of Burns to Lapraik are well known. His advances, as an “ unknown frien’,” were met upon the part of the Bard of Muirkirk by that openness and warmth of feeling which were the characteristics of the unfortunate but still facetious miller of Muirsmill. “ The reply of Lapraik,” says Allan Cunningham, “ has been recorded ; it was in its nature pleasing, and drew from the Bard of Mosgiel a second epistle, in which he says much of his toils and his musings.” Cunningham has not stated *where* the reply is recorded. Assuredly not in Lapraik’s volume ; nor in any of the editions of the works of Burns. That the correspondence, however, was carried on for some time is evident. One of Lapraik’s sons, James, now living in Muirkirk, recollects having been the bearer of several communications betwixt his father and Burns, who was then at Mosgiel. On the

Hae I a joy ? its a’ her ain ;
 United still her heart and mine ;
 They’re like the woodbine round the tree,
 That’s twined till death shall *them* disjoin.”

“ This song,” says Burns, “ was the work of a very worthy, facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram, near Muirkirk ; which little property he was obliged to sell, in consequence of some connexion as security for some persons concerned in that villanous bubble, the Ayr Bank. He has often told me that he composed this song one day when his wife had been fretting o’er their misfortunes.”

first occasion, he found the Bard in a field engaged in sowing corn. "I'm no sure if I ken the han'," said Burns, as he took possession of the letter; but no sooner had he glanced at its contents, than unconsciously letting go the sheet containing the grain, it was not till he had finished reading that he discovered the loss he had sustained.

There are three epistles by Burns to Lapraik preserved. Two were published in his first and second editions, and the third appeared for the first time in Cromek's *Reliques of Burns*, from the Poet's book of MSS.* It is to be regretted that the epistles of Lapraik are not preserved. Though probably possessed of no intrinsic merit, they would have served to illustrate those of Burns, and have gratified that curiosity which the want of them cannot fail to create. Burns in his first epistle proposed a meeting at Mauchline—

" But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae nicht's discharge to care
 If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware
 Wi' ane anither."

The Poets met as proposed; and, though we have no record of that night's proceedings, imagination will be at no loss to fill up the blank. That it had been agreeable, and such as to excite the desire of greater intimacy, may be inferred from the third letter of Burns, (September 13, 1785,) in which he promises, that

"—If the beast and branks be spared
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
An' a' the vittel in the yard,
 An theekit richt,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
 Ac winter nicht.

* Cunningham is in error when he says—"This third and last epistle of Burns to Lapraik was omitted in the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions, and *might have been lost*, had not the Bard of Muirkirk, cheered by the success of his brother of Mosgiel, given his poetie works to the world, and printed the hasty effort of his friend by way of illustration." The *hasty effort* does *not* appear in Lapraik's volume.

Then muse-inspirin' aquavitæ,
 Shall mak' us baith sae blythe and witty,
 Till ye forget ye're auld and gitty,
 An' be as eanty
 As ye were nine years less than thretty,
 Sweet ane-and-twenty."

The Poet, in this instance, was as good as his word. In the course of the winter he visited Lapraik at Muirsmill, where he dined, spent a merry evening, and next morning took his departure for Mosgiel.

The flattering attention paid him by Burns, and the reception which the works of that Poet met from the public, had the effect of stimulating Lapraik, who, though now far advanced in years, resolved upon venturing before the world as an author. With this view he set about wooing the muse with all the freshness of a green old age; and in 1788 appeared, from the Kilmarnock press, the works of the Poet of Muirkirk, entitled "Poems, on several occasions, by John Lapraik," 8vo, pp. 240. With the exception of the song already quoted, few of the pieces display any approach to poetic merit; still the volume is not without interest, and is now so very rare, that a few extracts, we doubt not, will prove acceptable to our readers. It is rather surprising that the volume contains none of the author's epistles to Burns, the very pieces, of all others, that would have most enhanced his work in the eyes of posterity. There is, to be sure, one epistle to the Poet, but of a more recent date than their first correspondence, and is chiefly an apology for his attempting to court the muse in his old age:—

" I liked the lasses unco weel,
 Langsyne when I was young,
 Which sometimes kittled up my muse,
 To write a kind love sang."

Yet it never occurred to him, as he himself expresses it, to trouble the world with his "dull, insipid, thowless rhyme,"

" Till your kind muse, wi' *friendly blast*,
 First tooted up my *fame*,
 And sounded loud thro' a' the wast,
 My lang-forgotten name."

In the "Poet's Apology for Rhyming," Lapraik soliloquizes in a sensible strain:—

" No satire keen shall make me rage,
 Ev'n tho' my fate were worse ;
 My head's grown empty by old age,
 But not so toom's my purse !

My means and credit, fickle things !
 They both are fled and gone ;
 And I my weary days maun pass
 Unheeded and unknown !
 * * *

I for a feast will never fawn,
 Nor pour out my complaint :
 If *welcome's hand* is now withdrawn,
 I'll stay at home content.

I'll make my pottage, boil my kail,
 Remote and little known :
 With ink I'll black the other sheet,
 Regardless of man's frown.
 * * *

I'm not so vain as to pretend
 To teach men to behave ;
 Yet still am of a nobler mind
 Than ever be their slave.

I love a friend that's frank and free,
 Who tells to me his mind :
 I hate to hing upon a *hank*,
 With *hums* and *hws* confined."
 * * *

It appears that shortly before publishing his Poems, the author had entertained the notion of emigrating to America. In the prospect of this, he writes the following "Farewell to his Native Country:"—

" Farewell, ye dear delightful fields,
 Where first my breath I drew !
 Farewell, my much respected friends,
 I bid you all adieu !
 For other fields and other plains,
 And other clouds and skies ;
 For other distant, unknown scens,
 I now must sail the seas !

In spring, which decks the blooming year
 With flowers both fresh and gay,
 I pull'd those flowers that were so fair,
 But now I must away.
 I wonder'd at the scene so gay,
 With colours of each hue ;
 In innocence I spent each day,
 Yet bid those days adieu !
 * * *

In ease I spent my youthful days ;
 My friends they me carest ;
 Quite free of care, in sports and plays,
 I was supremely blest !
 I ne'er envied the rich and great,
 Nor did I wealth pursue ;
 Yet now I leave my native seat,
 And bid a long adieu !

When standing on yon river side,
 Where trees and bushes grow,
 Where Nature's deck'd in flow'ry pride,
 And murm'ring streams do flow,
 I listen'd to the pleasing strain
 That echo'd thro' the vale—
 No longer here I must remain,
 And so I bid farewell !
 * * *

My native spot, on banks of *Ayr*,
 May sweets adorn thy soil !
 Let Nature's blooming face so fair,
 Aye bless thee with her smile !
 Let flow'rs of every various kind,
 Each colour and each hue,
 Produce such sweets as suit the mind
 Of every friend that's true !

You friends, who graced my little book,
 And share my joy and woe,
 May health and peace still be your lot,
 And wealth still on you flow !
 Your friendship I will ne'er forget ;
 I'll to your mem'ry kneel !
 To every friend, with aching heart
 I bid a sad farewell !"
 * * *

These quotations are probably more than sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of the reader. Though displaying little, indeed, of

the genius of poetry, the productions of Lapraik are characterized by good sense and justness of observation; and breathe so much the spirit of philanthropic independence as fairly to establish his claim to the title of the "bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts," bestowed upon him by Burns. One other extract and we have done. It is

" THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DUNDONALD'S
WELCOME TO AYRSHIRE.

July 1787.

* * *

Hail, great Dundonald! wise and sage,
Bright ornament of this our age!
Thy virtues great, and godlike skill,
With grateful joy each heart do fill!

* * *

Each proud philosopher doth see,
And owns himself excell'd by thee:
They waste their time in dry disputes,
Whilst thou by practice show'st its fruits.

* * *

Men now no more need fetch from far
That useful article called *Tar*;
Great Britain's thunder now may roar
In dreadful claps from shore to shore!
With joy we see her men-of-war
Secured by thy matchless tar,
That worins in vain their force employ,
Their warlike bottoms to destroy.
With it bedaub'd, they longer last
Than they were sheath'd with *metal cast*.
The furious waves may dash in vain;
Their well-pitch'd sides do firm remain;
Corroding Time's destructive force,
In ages scarce can make them worse.

Ill fortune, with redoubled blow,
Had long laid Ayrshire very low!
Her manufactures and her trade
Seem'd ruin'd quite, without remead;
One blink of hope did scarce remain
That e'er she flourish would again.
That woful Bank, that *plague of plagues*,
Had fairly kick'd her off her legs.

* * *

As Phœbus with his glorious light
 Dispels the gloomy shades of night,
 The world that late in darkness lay,
 Transported, hails the cheerful day ;
 So Ayrshire lifts her drooping head,
 Erewhile in gloomy darkness laid,
 And casting round her wond'ring eyes,
 Beholds Dundonald great arise ;
 And stretching forth a gen'rous hand,
 To save from death a ruin'd land !

But chief Muirkirk, a poor starved place.*
 With hunger painted in its face,
 With joy may bless the happy day,
 That e'er your lordship came this way."

This address to the late Lord Dundonald, refers to a bright period in that unfortunate nobleman's history. Much given to scientific pursuits, he made various useful discoveries, and among others that of a peculiar description of tar, extracted from coal, found to be an excellent preventive of rot in vessels, from which our navy formerly suffered so severely, that in the course of a few months ships of the line were frequently rendered unfit for service. Lord Dundonald first obtained a patent for his discovery, and subsequently an Act of Parliament, securing it to him and his heirs for twenty years. Immediately upon procuring this, his lordship formed what was termed the "British Coal Tar Company," in which he is understood to have embarked the greater part of his fortune. Muirkirk, on account of its minerals, was selected as a suitable district for the operations of the company—ground was feued, pits sunk, and a range of buildings erected for carrying on the chemical process. The works, begun in 1785, were the following year nearly in full operation. Besides tar, the company manufactured paint, oil, salts, and magne-

* Prior to the erection of the Tar and Iron Works, Muirkirk was a very insignificant village. Since then it has greatly increased, numbering about twelve hundred inhabitants according to the census of 1831. It consists chiefly of one long irregular street, neither paved nor lighted; yet, notwithstanding the bleak aspect of the surrounding district, the inhabitants manifest considerable advancement in the comforts of life.

sia; and for a time success seemed so certain, that Lord Dundonald is said to have refused an annuity of five or six thousand a-year, offered him by an English company, for the surrender of his patent. Never were hopes more speedily and effectually blighted. The plan of sheathing vessels with copper having been soon thereafter adopted, the use of Lord Dundonald's pitch for marine purposes was almost entirely superseded. The sudden close of the chief market upon which his lordship had calculated, proved ruinous to his hopes of prosperity. Notwithstanding, the works continued in operation for some time, first under the management of the late Admiral Keith Stewart,* and latterly of John Loudon M'Adam, the celebrated road-improver. The buildings are now nearly in ruins, and are partially appropriated to the use of the Iron Works, which, commencing about the year 1787, have since been carried on with increasing prosperity. Lord Dundonald was a patriotic, but speculative and unfortunate nobleman. He died at Paris, at an advanced age, on the 1st July 1831, in great penury.

The subsequent history of Lapraik admits of little detail. About 1796, then far advanced in years, he gave up the mill, and for a year or two lived in a house which had been built for an inn at Nether Wellwood by Admiral Keith Stewart. On leaving this, he removed to Muirkirk, where he opened a small public-house in a corner land leading from the main street to the church, which at the same time served as the village post-office, the venerable Poet, through the kindness of his friends, having been installed into that important trust. Here he lived much respected till his death, which occurred on the 7th May 1807, in the eightieth year of his age.

In the vigour of life Lapraik was a stout muscular man, about five feet eleven inches in height, and well formed. There is no portrait of him preserved; and none of his children (at least those who survive) are considered to bear a striking resemblance

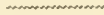
* The Admiral appears to have been a kind friend to Lapraik, as well as to the inhabitants of Muirkirk generally. The Poet expresses his gratitude in a few verses, entitled "The Wish."

to him. By his second wife, Janet Anderson, he had a large family, nine of whom attained the years of maturity. Three brothers and one sister still reside near the place of their birth. The latter was married to a Mr M'Minn, farmer, Nether Wellwood.* She is a widow—an elderly, matronly-looking woman—and perfectly remembers the visit paid by Burns to her father at Muirsmill. Her brother, Thomas, has long been shepherd on the farm, which is large, and consists partly of hill pasture. James and John reside in Muirkirk. The former is a retired farmer. The latter served his apprenticeship as a cooper, but was pressed on board a man-of-war; and, having been captured by the enemy, was ten years in French prison. After the peace he returned to Muirkirk, where he now follows his original calling. He is the only one of his trade in the village, and is on that account generally styled “the cooper.” He is well-known in the neighbourhood—can spin an interesting yarn—and, like a genuine old tar, is by no means averse to his grog.

* Near to Wellwood, which in former times belonged to a scion of the house of Loudon, of the name of Campbell, is the grave of William Adam, one of the victims of the Persecution. The small grey stone, which marks his place of sepulture, bears the following inscription:—“Here lyes William Adam, who was shot in this place by Cap. Dalziel and his party, for his adherence to the Word of God, and Scotland’s Covenanted Work of Reformation, March 1685.” This inscription is scarcely legible, the renovating chissel of “Old Mortality” having apparently never been applied in renewing the brief but expressive record. The spot, indeed, is not generally known. No detailed account of the affair occurs in the “Cloud of Witnesses,” nor has Chambers, in his “Picture of Scotland,” alluded to the obscure but interesting grave of the solitary sleeper. Visitors usually have their attention engrossed by recollections of the more celebrated martyrs—Cameron, and Brown the “Christian Carrier”—whose graves are also in the neighbourhood of Muirkirk; that of Cameron at the *western*, and not the *eastern*, extremity of Aird’s Moss, as inadvertently stated in the “Picture of Scotland.” The tradition at Wellwood is, that Adam, who was one of the domestics of the house, on perceiving Dalziel and his party, immediately fled and was pursued. He had cleared the rivulet, when a ball brought him down, just as he was about to ascend the rising ground, which is now, and probably was then, covered with trees and brushwood. He was interred exactly on the spot where he fell. It is supposed that Campbell was the person whom the soldiers were most anxious to secure, and that they imagined Adam to be him. In the “Cloud of Witnesses,” it is stated somewhat vaguely that “Captain Dalziel and Lieut. Stradon, with their men, found William Adam hiding in a bush, and instantly killed him, at the Wellwood, in Kyle, *February 1685.*”

The widow of Lapraik survived till the 5th of March 1825, when she expired in the eighty-third year of her age. All her husband's books and papers continued in her possession; but, as no importance was attached to them, scarcely a vestige of his MSS. is now in existence; and none of his family have even a copy of his Poems, the few that remained having been either complimented or carried away by friends who had no intention of returning them.

Lapraik was interred in the Churchyard of Muirkirk, where a large tabular stone records the death of himself, his wife, and several children.



JEANIE GLOVER,

AUTHORESS OF "O'ER THE MOOR AMANG THE HEATHER."

BURNS communicated this song to "Johnson's Scots Musical Museum;" and in his "Remarks on Scottish Songs and Ballads," he states, in language somewhat rude, that it "is the composition of a JEAN GLOVER, a girl who was not only a ——, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the correction-houses in the west. She was born, I believe, in Kilmarnock: I took the song down from her singing as she was strolling with a slight-of-hand blackguard through the country." Though the song alluded to has been long popular, and copied into numerous collections, this is all that has hitherto transpired respecting Jeanie Glover. That the song was her own we are left in no manner of doubt; for it must be inferred, from the positive statement of the Poet, that she had herself assured him of the fact. It is well that Burns expressed himself in decided language; for otherwise it would scarcely be credited that one of our

sweetest and most simple lyrics should have been the production of a person whose habits and course of life were so irregular:—

“ Comin’ thro’ the Craigs o’ Kyle,*
 Among the bonnie blooming heather,
 There I met a bonnie lassie
 Keeping a’ her yowes thegither.

O’er the moor among the heather,
 O’er the moor among the heather,
 There I met a bonnie lassie
 Keeping a’ her yowes thegither.

Says I, my dear, where is thy hame,
 In moor or dale, pray tell me whether?
 She says, I tent the fleecy flocks,
 That feed among the blooming heather.
 O’er the moor, &c.

We laid us down upon a bank,
 Sae warm and sunny was the weather;
 She left her flocks at large to rove
 Among the bonnie blooming heather.
 O’er the moor, &c.

While thus we lay she sang a sang,
 Till echo rang a mile and farther;
 And aye the burden o’ the sang
 Was—o’er the moor among the heather.
 O’er the moor, &c.

She charm’d my heart, an’ aye sin syne,
 I coudna think on ony ither;
 By sea and sky she shall be mine!
 The bonnie lass among the heather.
 O’er the moor,” &c.

When at Muirkirk, we were fortunate enough to learn a few particulars relative to Jeanie Glover. A niece of hers still resides there,† and one or two old people distinctly remember having seen her. She was born at the Townhead of Kilmarnock on the 31st October 1758, of parents respectable in their sphere.‡

* The Craigs o’ Kyle are a range of small hills about a mile south of the village of Coilton, in the parish of that name.

† A sister’s son and daughter also live at the Sorn.

‡ “ James Glover, weaver in Kilmarnock, and Jean Thomson, both their first marriages, had their 3d child born on Tuesday, October 31, 1758, and baptized *Jean*, on

That her education was superior, the circumstances of her birth will not permit us to believe ; but she was brought up in the principles of rectitude, and had the advantage of that early instruction which few Scottish families are without. She was remarkable for beauty—both of face and figure—properties which, joined to a romantic and poetic fancy, had no doubt their influence in shaping her future unfortunate career. She was also an excellent singer.

Until within these few years, Kilmarnock had no theatre, or at least any building so called ; but strolling parties of players were in the habit of frequenting the town at fairs, and on other public occasions, sometimes performing in booths, or in the “ Croft Lodge,” long known as a place of amusement. Having been a witness to some of these exhibitions, Jeanie unhappily became enamoured of the stage ; and in an evil hour eloped with one of the heroes of the sock and buskin. Her subsequent life, as may be guessed, was one of adventure, checkered, if Burns is to be credited, with the extremes of folly, vice, and misfortune.

About the time the Iron Works commenced, a brother of Jeanie (James Glover) removed from Kilmarnock to Muirkirk ; and there, in the employ of the Company, continued until his death, which occurred about fourteen years ago, leaving a daughter (the niece formerly mentioned), whose husband is one of the carpenters employed at the works. This individual, as well as several others, recollects having seen Jeanie and the “ slight-of-hand blackguard”—whose name was Richard—at Muirkirk, forty-three years ago (about 1795), where they performed for a few nights in the large room of a public-house called the “ Black Bottle,” from a sign above the door of that description, kept by one David Lennox. During her stay on this occasion she complimented her brother with a cheese and a boll of meal—a circumstance strongly indicative of her sisterly affection, and the success that had attended the entertainments given by her and her husband. Those persons who recollect her appearance at this time, notwith-

Sabbath, Nov. 5, 1758, by Mr John Cunningham, minister, Dalmellington.—Extracted from the Register of Births and Baptisms of the Town and Parish of Kilmarnock, upon the 17th day of January 1839. WM. ANDERSON, *Sess. Clk.*”

standing the many vicissitudes she must have previously encountered, describe her as exceedingly handsome. One old woman with whom we conversed, also remembered having seen Jeanie at a fair in Irvine, gaily attired, and playing on a tambarine at the mouth of a close, in which was the exhibition-room of her husband the conjurer. "Weel do I remember her," said our informant, "an' thocht her the bravest woman I had ever seen step in leather shoon!"

Such are our Muirkirk reminiscences of Jeanie Glover. From another source we learn that she sometimes paid a theatrical visit to her native town. One individual there, who knew her well, states that he has heard her sing in the "Croft Lodge." The song she generally sung, and for which she was most famed, was "Green grow the rashes." The same person afterwards became a soldier; and, being in Ireland with his regiment, happened to see Jeanie performing in the town of Letterkenny. He introduced himself to her acquaintance, and had the *honour* of her company over a social glass. This occurred in 1801. She was then apparently in good health, gay and sprightly as when in her native country; but, alas! before he left Letterkenny—and he was only about two months in it—she was "mouldering in silent dust." She must therefore have died rather suddenly, in or near that town, in the year above mentioned.

DAVID SILLAR,

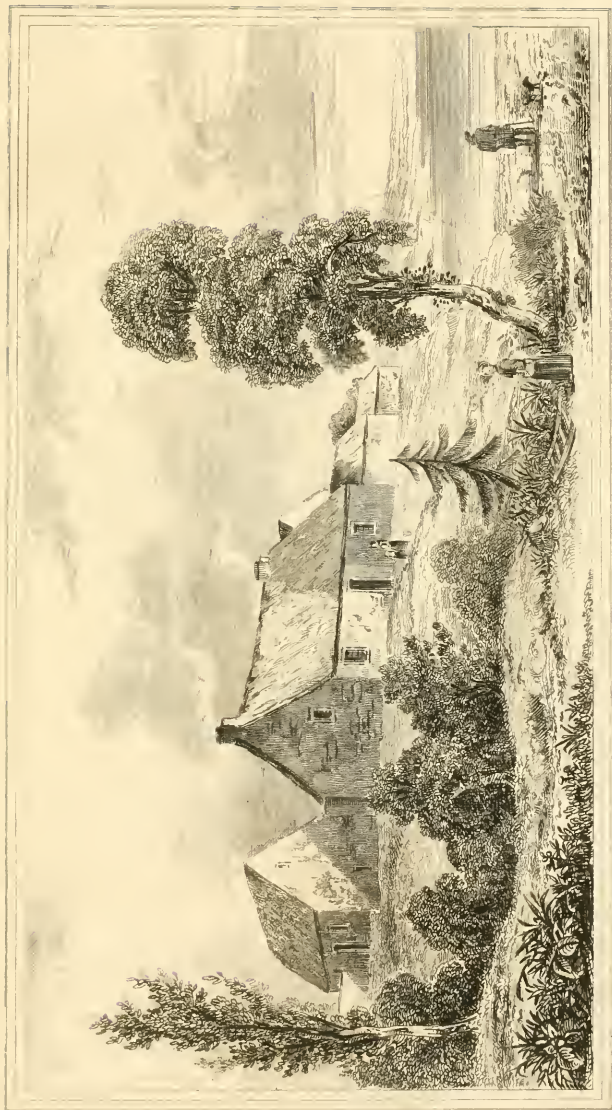
THE EARLY FRIEND AND CORRESPONDENT OF BURNS.

DAVID SILLAR was a younger son of Patrick Sillar, tenant of Spittleside, a pleasantly situated farm within a mile of the village of Tarbolton. Born in 1760, he was at least a year the junior of Burns. His claim to the title of "scholar," bestowed upon him by Allan Cunningham, could scarcely be superior, if even equal to that of his more celebrated brother Poet, having been taught only the common branches of education—reading, writing, and arithmetic—at the parish school, and brought up to the laborious avocations of an agricultural life. Of his scholastic attainments he thus speaks in his "Epistle to the Critics:"—

“ Then know, when I these pieces made,
Was toiling for my daily bread :
A scanty learning I enjoy'd,
Sae judge how I hae it employ'd.
I ne'er depended for my knowledge
On school, academy, nor college :
I gat my learnin' at the flail,
An' some I catch'd at the plough-tail.
Amang the brutes I own I'm bred, ;
Since herding was my native trade.

Some twa-three books I read wi' care,
Which I had barrow'd here an' there.
The actions an' the ways o' men,
I took great pains an' care to ken :
Frae them, their manners, an' their looks,
Their words, their actions, an' frae books ;
On these for knowledge I relied,
Without anither for my guide.
Latin an' Greck I never knew sic,
An' sae how can my works be classic ?”

Here the author admits his ignorance of classical learning, and is apparently quite unambitious of the honours of scholarship.



J. O'Brien, Sc.

R. C. Robertson, Del.

SPITTLE SIDE.

Edin'burgh Public Works, Messrs. Currier & Co. 1839

That he had a turn for books, and was known in the circle of his friends by his attempts at "hameley westlan' jingle," will readily be conceded. Like Burns, he was a son of toil—assisting in the cultivation of the farm, which was chiefly managed by his father and brothers; and the similarity of fortune may not have been without its effect in cementing the friendship which obtained betwixt the rustic aspirants for poetic fame. "At the time he (Sillar) became intimate with the family of William Burness," says Cunningham, "he kept the parish school; Robert, who never neglected an opportunity of obtaining knowledge, cultivated his acquaintance, and was his frequent companion in excursions among the hills and vales of Kyle, to look at the beauties of nature, animate and inanimate." It is true that David Sillar did keep the parish school for a month or two during the vacancy, previous to the appointment of John Wilson, the "Hornbook o' the clachan;" but the intimacy of the Poets must have commenced at a much earlier period. The "First Epistle to Davie" bears unquestionable witness of the fact:—

" Think ye, that sic as *you and I,*
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet and dry,
 Wi' never-ceasing toil;
 Think ye, are we less blest than they,
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
 As hardly worth their while?"

Had Sillar been at this time teacher of the *parish school*, or indeed of any other school, Burns could not with any degree of propriety have expressed himself so pointedly, in allusion to the *rustic* and laborious nature of *their* occupations. In the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions, the Epistle is dated "*January* —;" but, from the recollections of Gilbert Burns, who *thinks* his brother first read it to him in the summer of 1784, the poem, in most of the recent editions, is set down as a production of that year. To us, however, it appears obvious that the proper date ought to be *January 1782*, Sillar having removed from the parish of Tarbolton towards the close of 1783.

William Burness (or Burns, as afterwards altered by the Poet) and family came to the farm of Lochlea in 1777; and, in the

absence of direct information, there is reason to suppose that the intimacy of the youthful Poets had its origin in 1780, or beginning of 1781. In the former year Burns instituted the Bachelor's Club—a debating society in Tarbolton, of which Sillar did not become a member till May 1781; and it is presumable from his character, that, had they been earlier acquainted, he would have been among the first to enrol his name. Sillar, though he does not mention the precise period, has himself recorded the circumstances that led to their first introduction:—

“ Robert Burns,” he says, “ was some time in the parish of Tarbolton, prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily procured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustie circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe he had a great deal to say for himself, and that they suspected his principles. He wore the only tied hair in the parish; and in the church, his plaid, which was of a particular colour, (I think fillemot,) he wrapped in a peculiar manner round his shoulders. These surmises and his exterior *made me solicitous of his acquaintance*. I was introduced by Gilbert not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where in a short time I became a frequent, and I believe not unwelcome, visitant. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the Bard, we frequently met upon Sundays at church, when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or lasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have often been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex; and many times when I have been bashfully anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance. Some of the few opportunities of a noontide walk that a country life allows her laborious sons, he spent on the banks of the river, or in the walks in the neighbourhood of Stair. Some book or other he always carried to read when not otherwise employed; it was likewise his custom to read at table.”

At the period alluded to, the family of William Burness still occupied the farm of Lochlea, situated about two miles from Spittleside; a distance not so great in a rural district as to prove a barrier in the way of friendly intercourse. In days when "rockings" were more frequent than they are now, it was no uncommon thing to travel eight or ten miles to a social meeting.

That Burns, the elder of the two both in years and genius, cultivated the acquaintance of David Sillar with the view of profiting by the superior education of the latter, is altogether fabulous; the thirst for knowledge may be more properly considered to have been mutual, each feeling inspired by a latent hope that he might one day or other be distinguished in the minstrelsy of his native country. We are not, however, to suppose them the ascetic worshippers of "nature, animate and inanimate," which their occasional wanderings among the "Craigs o' Kyle" might indicate. To be merry as well as wise was a practical axiom of their philosophy, and none were capable of contributing more to the hilarity of those occasional meetings, which still obtain to a considerable extent among the peasantry. With a greater degree of prudence, or diffidence perhaps, than his more celebrated contemporary, David Sillar possessed no inconsiderable share of that love of adventure and rustic intrigue so happily depicted in the "Winter Evening Tales" of the Ettrick Shepherd. Burns and he had often officiated as "black soles" to each other; and we give Cunningham due credit for the following anecdote:—"David was acquainted with the nursery-maid of Stair, Margaret Orr,* and it is to this young woman that Burns alludes when he says in his epistle—

‘Ye love your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean.’

The Bard of Mosgiel accompanied his friend on one of these visits, and, as some of the lasses sung well, he gave them one or

* Margaret Orr was born at Kilwinning, where her father was a road-contractor, but he afterwards removed to Tarbolton. She married Mr John Paton, a master shoemaker in Edinburgh, where she died on the 22d Jan. 1837, leaving a son, a respectable boot-maker in Circus Place. Her brother John, who was one of the last members of the *Bachelor's Club* at Tarbolton, died there on the 29th Jan. 1837, aged seventy-seven.

two of his songs. Mrs Stewart happened by chance to see one of these compositions, and was so much pleased with its grace and tenderness, that she desired to be told when the author visited Stair again. It was in this way his acquaintance with that accomplished lady began; and, many years afterwards, the Poet told Miss Stewart that, when requested to walk into the drawing-room to be introduced to her mother, he suffered more than he would like to suffer again. ‘Indeed,’ he said, ‘I endured such palpitation of heart as I never afterwards experienced among

‘Lords and ladies of high degree.’”*

At this period the pure rusticity of the Poet was comparatively untainted, and he had not even dreamed of those intoxicating scenes afterwards spread out for him by the “Embroider’d Gentles;” but both Burns and *Daintie Davie* were known for a liberality of sentiment, and a love of pleasure, not altogether in accordance with the orthodox notions of propriety entertained by their Calvinistic neighbours. Happily for Sillar, if he was outstripped in the race for poetic fame, he had the strength of mind to resist those temptations, to which, in the vortex of a larger and more overwhelming circle, his distinguished friend fell an early victim.

Though “bred among the brutes,” to use his own expression, David Sillar never manifested any great *penchant* for hard labour; and he appears at an early period to have contemplated embracing some other occupation more congenial to his taste. Having added to his boyish attainments at school, by the perusal of such books as came in his way, and by a renewal of his knowledge of grammar and arithmetic, he prepared himself for undertaking the arduous duties of a preceptor. As already mentioned, he taught the parish school for a short period, probably in the expectation of being continued as teacher. Disappointed, however, he after-

* “This introduction,” continues Cunningham, “is supposed to have taken place in 1784; and, if this date is correct, Mrs Stewart must be hereafter regarded as one of the first in Ayrshire, above the Poet’s rank in life, who perceived his genius, and treated him with respect.” We are inclined to think that this introduction must have taken place at a still earlier period, as David Sillar had the year before been settled in Irvine—a distance of at least fourteen miles from Stair.

wards opened a small school at Commonsides, near the village of Tarbolton; but, finding the speculation any thing but profitable, the *taws* were speedily thrown aside for the more stimulating attractions of trade. David commenced business as a grocer in Irvine* towards the close of 1783, being then in his twenty-third year. Writing to a friend, in January 1786, he says—

“ It is twa years, an’ something mair,
 Sin’ I left Kyle i’ this same shire,
 An’ cam’ to trade, an’ think, an’ fare,
 Like ither men,
 ‘Side Irvine banks, an’ country fair
 O’ Kinnikem.”†

One would naturally suppose that, in coming to “ trade, an’ think, an’ fare, like ither men,” David had abandoned the visions of love and poesy in which he had indulged with his brother Bard, while wandering by the banks of the “ gurgling Ayr” or “ mystic Fale;” but such was not the case. Many of his published poems bear the impress of the locality of Irvine; and the few first years of his residence there, seem to have been devoted with more than usual earnestness in urging his suit with the Muses.

Sillar had probably never entertained any serious intention of coming before the public as an author, until prompted by the extraordinary success of the Poet of Mosgiel. In July 1786, appeared the Kilmarnock edition of Burns; and, in 1789, from the same press, followed the “ Poems, by David Sillar.” The volume (8vo,) now extremely scarce, consists of two hundred and forty-seven pages, and in point of typography is highly creditable to the provincial printer. The Poems were dedicated to Hugh Montgomery, Esq. of Skelmorlie, afterwards Earl of Eglinton, and prefaced by the following introduction:—

“ Mankind in general, but particularly those who have had the advantage of a liberal education, may deem it presumption in the author, who has been denied that privilege, to attempt either instruction or amusement. But however necessary a learned education may be in Divinity, Philosophy, or the Sciences, it is a fact that some of the best

* His shop was one of those under the Tolbooth, and next to the Council-Chambers; for Irvine is still old-fashioned enough to have the seat of justice and the cell of punishment conspicuously placed in the centre of the main street.

† Cunninghame, one of the districts of Ayrshire.

Poetical Performances amongst us have been composed by illiterate men. Natural genius alone is sufficient to constitute a Poet: for, the imperfections in the works of many poetical writers, which are ascribed to want of education, may, he believes, with more justice, be ascribed to want of genius. He leaves every person to judge of his by his writings. The following pieces were composed just as the objects they treat of struck his imagination; and, if they give others the same pleasure in reading which they gave him in composing, he will have the satisfaction of obtaining his principal end in publishing.

“The design of the author in this publication is by no means to offend, but to instruct and amuse; and although some, with greater judgment and sagacity, might have steered a more prudent course for themselves, yet he is conscious, however he may be treated, of having kept clear of personal reflections. The approbation of the judicious, though few, will always support him under the censures of the superstitious and prejudiced, and inspire him with a proper disregard for popular applause.

“For the liberal encouragement his respectable and numerous subscribers has given him, the author returns his sincere thanks:

“For back’d by them, his foes, thro’ spite,
May girn their fill, but darena bite.”

On glancing over the volume of David Sillar, we are at once struck with the truth of his own axiom—that the ill success of Poets proceeds as often from lack of genius as from a deficiency of education. His Pegasus is none of the thorough-bred Medusian blood, and is sometimes so “be-devill’d wi’ the spavie,” that it is with difficulty she can be kept on the road. With all, and even more than, the occasional grossness and indelicacy of Burns, he is entirely deficient in that happy strain of humour and gaiety of fancy which alone can barely suffice to extenuate a breach of propriety. His advice to the “Lasses of Irvine” is highly judicious, but too immodest to be wholly quoted:—

“The time o’ youth’s a pleasin’ time,
For lasses young an’ dainty,
Before they pass out owre the line,
Hae aften lads in plenty:
But gif they chance to pass their prime,
Braw wooers then grow scant aye;
Then dinna, tho’ your sun does shine,
Think ye’ll get leave to rant aye
Wi’ lads ilk day.

But while that plenty ye can get,
Wale ane out for yoursel’, lass:
For when your sun is fairly set,
Ye’ll maybe choose a dull ass.

I've seen young lasses tak' the pet,
 Tho' nane were but themsel' fause.
 When auld, set out themsel's to let,
 An' bought, thro' greed, for auld brass,
 Aff han' some day."

* * *

Burns sang in praise of whisky. David Sillar took up an opposite strain; and, if he displays less poetic fire, there is at all events sound sense, and not a few passable stanzas in the poem of the latter:—

" Poets, wi' muckle wit an' skill,
 Hae sung the virtues o' Scots yill;
 An' wi' the worth o' Highlan' gill
 Our ears hae rung:
 The bad effects o' whisky still
 Remain unsung.

I'm sair surprised how whisky poison,
 Frae men o' sense, has got sic fraisin':
 They might hae sung, wi' greater reason,
 Gude caller water,
 Which cheaper is in ony season,
 An' slockens better.

Hail! caller burn! chief o' Scots drink!
 To purchase thee we need nae clink:
 Just lout out owre a burnie's brink,
 An' tak' our fill;
 'Twill neither mak' us glow'r nor wink,
 Like whisky gill.

But whisky, warst o' Scotlan's curses,
 Than it I ken o' nane that worse is;
 It mak's poor bodies draw their purses,
 Though hunger stare,
 An' pawn their dudds for't aff their ——.
 An' rin threadbare.

The *whisky trade*—deil cares wha had it:
 My curse on him at first wha made it;
 May't doubly light ou those wha spread it,
 An' drinkin' cherish;
 Lord toom their pouch, an' clip their credit,
 For fear we perish.

Whaeveer at their wark wad thrive,
 Sud a' wi' ane anither strive,

To keep a sense o' shame alive,
 Within their sphere,
 An' no let whisky-drinkin' drive
 Them to despair.

I've seen chieks aft-times i' their daffin
 Sit down to tak' a social chappin ;
 But ere they raise, wi' their gif-gaffin,
 Hae bred a brulzie,
 Was like to en' their mirth an' laughin'
 In bitter tulzie.

When kintra fo'k gang till a roup ;
 Wee blastet ghaist ! the whisky stoup
 Aft gars them claw a ragget doup—
 Their fear it buries,
 Then gars them dance hap-stap-an'-loup,
 An' bid like furies.

It mak's men to their passions blin',
 It mak's young lasses unco kin' :
 Fill ten o' them, I'll wad there's nine
 Their fame wad spatter,
 Whase characters wad catch nae stain
 Frae caller water.

It tak's the best bits o' the fiel' ;
 It robs our markets o' gude meal ;
 It aft-times mak's the simple chiel
 Baith fa' and swagger ;
 And turns him aft a ne'er-do-weel,
 Or randy beggar.

It mither is o' much offence ;
 It borders aye on some mischance ;
 It leads poor mortals aft a dance,
 Shame to be seen !
 Then leaves them in a drunken trance,
 Fyled to the cen.

A wee drap whisky's mneo gude ;
 It cheers the heart, an' warms the blood,
 An' puts our spirits in gude mood ;
 But tent neist verse :
 Owre muckle o't pits fo'k red wood,
 An' sometimes warse.

' I own a man brought frae the hill,
 Clap in his check a Highlan' gill ;

Say, such is Royal George's will,
 An' there's the foc,
 He'll hae nae thought but how to kill
 Twa at a blow.*

But gie him whisky till he's fon,
 Then o' his actions tak' a view ;
 Poor dorted deil ! what can he do
 In sic debauches,
 But curse, blaspheme, swear, bock, an' spue—
 The wretch o' wretches !

I've scen (an' aft my heart's been wac)
 Untlinkin' mortals led astray ;
 By whisky made a certain prey,
 First to dejection,
 Then led by b*ds the beaten way
 To their destruction.

O' a' ye Lords wha rule the nation,
 An' Commoners o' ev'ry station,
 Ye'll send the kintra to d-mn-tion,
 An' that ye'll see,
 Whene'er ye grant the distillation
 O' curst whisky.†

But tak' your chance, gif ye do grant it,
 I'll lay my lugs ye'll be affrontet :
 Ye'll maybe sair some day repent it
 When past remead,
 That ever whisky free was ventet
 On this side Tweed.

By grantin' it, ye're maybe thinkin'
 Your rent at Beltan ye'll get clinkin' ;
 But, deil-ma'-care ! ye'll get a jinkin'
 Will gar you glunch,
 When rents are spent by tenants drinkin'
 Your whisky-punch.

I speakna this like frantic fools,
 Or children o' the prophet's schools,
 Wha at this wark‡ are merely tools
 Without reflection ;
 I point out facts, an' nature's rules
 Gie me direction.

* Burns.

† Written before the passing of the Distillation Act.

‡ Foretelling future events.

But no to mak' mae words about it,
 Those wha believe it not may doubt it,
 An' bouse till ance they're fairly goutet,
 An' then they'll ken,
 If they, or those wha live without it,
 Are wisest men."

The only specimen recorded of Sillar's correspondence with Burns, though the date is not mentioned, evidently refers to the period betwixt the publication of the first and second editions of his friend's poems :—

“ While Reekie's bards your muse commen',
 An' praise the numbers o' your pen,
 Accept this kin'ly frae a frien',
 Your Dainty Davie,
 Wha ace o' hearts does still remain,
 Ye may believe me.

I ne'er was muckle gi'en to praisin',
 Or else ye might be sure o' fraisin':
 For trowth, I think, in solid reason,
 Your kintra reed
 Plays sweet as Robin Fergusson,
 Or his on Tweed.*

Your *Luath, Cæsar* bites right sair;
 An' when ye paint the *Holy Fair*,
 Ye draw it to a very hair;
 Or when ye turn,
 An' sing the follies o' the Fair,
 How sweet ye mourn!

Let *Coila's* plains wi' me rejoice,
 An' praise the worthy *Bard* whose lays,
 Their worth and beauty high doth raise
 To lasting fame;
 His works, his worth, will ever praise
 An' crown his name.

Brave Ramsay now an' Fergusson,
 Wha hae sae lang time fill'd the Throne
 O' Poetry, may now lie down
 Quiet i' their urns,
 Since fame, in justice, gies the crown
 To *Coila's* Burns.

* Ramsay.

Hail, happy Bard! ye're now confest
 The king o' singers i' the west:
 Edina hath the same exprest;
 Wi' joy they fin'
 That ye're, when tried by Nature's test,
 Gude sterlin' coin.

Sing on my frien', your fame's secured,
 An' still maintain the name o' Bard;
 But yet tak' tent an' keep a guard,
 For Envy's tryin'
 To blast your name; mair just reward
 For the envyin'.

But tho' the tout o' Fame may please you,
 Let na the flatterin' ghaist o'erheeze you:
 Ne'er flyte nor fraise tae gar fo'k roose you,
 For men o' skill,
 When ye write weel, will always praise you
 Ont o' gude will.

Great numbers on this earthly ba',
 As soon as death gies them the ca',
 Permitted are to slide awa',
 An' straught forgot—
 Forbid that ever this should fa'
 To be your lot.

I ever had an anxious wish,
 Forgive me, Heaven! if 'twas amiss,
 That Fame in life my name would bless,
 An' kin'ly save
 It from the cruel tyrant's crush,
 Beyond the grave.

Tho' the fastest liver soonest dies,
 An' length o' days sud mak' ane wise;
 Yet haste wi' speed, to glory rise,
 An' spur your horse;
 They're shortest aye wha gain the prize
 Upo' the course.

Sae to conclude, auld frien' an' neebor,
 Your muse forgetna weel to feed her,
 Then steer through life wi' birr an' vigour
 To win a horn,
 Whase soun' shall reach ayont the Tiber
 'Mang cars unborn."

This epistle elicited the following reply from Burns :—

“ Auld Neebor,

I'm three times doubly owre your debtor,
 For your auld-farrent, frien'ly letter ;
 Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
 Ye speak sae fair ;
 For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter
 Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle ;
 Lang may your elbuck jink an' diddle,
 Tae cheer you thro' the weary widdle
 O' war'ly cares,
 Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
 Your auld gray hairs.

But Davie, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit ;
 I'm tauld the muse ye hae negleckit ;
 An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket
 Until ye fyke :
 Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faikit,
 Be hain't wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,
 Rivin' the words tae gar them clink ;
 Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
 Wi' jads or masons ;
 An' whyles, but aye owre late, I think
 Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
 Commen' me to the Bardie clan ;
 Except it be some idle plan
 O' rhymin' clink,
 The devil-haet, that I sud ban,
 They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae schme o' livin',
 Nae cares tae gie us joy or grievin' ;
 But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
 An' while ought's there,
 Then, hiltie-skiltie, we gae scrivin',
 An' fash nae mair.

Lecze me on rhyme ! it's aye a treasure,
 My chief, amaist my only pleasure ;
 At hame, a-fiel', at wark or leisure,
 The muse, poor hizzie !

Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure,
She's seldom lazy.

Haud tae the muse, my dainty Davie :
The warl' may play you monie a shavie ;
But for the muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae puir,
Na, even tho' limp'in' wi' the spavie
Frae door tae door." *

We have already quoted enough for the reader to form a pretty fair estimate of the poetic talent of the Bard of Irvine. There is one other piece, however, recording a rather humorous adventure, which we may not be altogether warranted in withholding. It is the tale of

“ TUNCAN AN' TONNEL ;

OR

THE EFFECTS O' WHISKY.

Tuncan an' Tonnel on a time,
As you the tale shall hear,
Gade baith awa' for Irish lime ;
Hersel's the poat tid steer.
Her poat was young, an' in her prime,
An' whisky did 'em cheer ;
They pat as muckle i' their wame
As keepet them frae fear
An' dread that day.

Before the win' they spread their sail,
An' for Belfast did bear ;
An' wi' a brisk an' prosp'rous gale,
Soon 'yont the Craig did steer.
When they arrived, they roar'd out hail,
' Fait she'll pe station here ;'
Syne heaved an anchor owre her tail,
An' made her fast, for fear
She'd tine that day.

When a' was fast, they baith gade out,
Their limestanes for to pought ;
Twa whisky jars they bure about,
To quench their Hielan' drought.

* David prefixed these verses to his volume of Poems.

DAVID SILLAR.

An' when they finish'd had their route,
 An' gotten a' they sought,
 A Lawlan' packman, young an' stout,
 Wad fain hae them to freight
 Him owre that day.

Quo' Tonnel, 'Fait we'll tak' her owre,
 Her pe an' honest Scots;
 We'll gang t' Arran in twal hour,
 An' gar her pay twa croats.
 Come gies a tram, the cloek pe four,
 Here's to our pony poats:
 Peugh, whare pe't now? Come, gies ane more;
 The worry's in her throats
 O stoure this day.'

The night grew dark, but far frae calm,
 Which threaten'd them wi' skaithing;
 Hersel's took aye the tither dram,
 But gied the packman naething.
 Yet lucky 'twas for pedlar Tam,
 Hersel's pe forgot ae thing,
 Or else the sea wadna been lang
 O' stappin' them frae breathing,
 Wi' brine that night.

When lang sax hours they toss'd had been,
 An' Tam, 'maist kill'd wi' fear,
 Right fain wad ken where they were in;
 Sae at hersel' did speer.
 'Gae sell t'y needle! sell t'y prin!'
 Quo' Tuncan wi' a sneer:
 'Fait Ilsa Craig 'll soon pe seen;
 Come, gies a tram to cheer
 Her up this night.'

Wi' drinkin' drams hersel's had past
 Fu' cheerily the night;
 But honest Tam through fear did fast
 Until the mornin' light.
 'Lort!' Tuncan cries, 'Arran at last,
 Come steer the poat aright;'
 But Tam did swear it was Belfast,
 An' not the Gaitfiel height
 They saw neist day.

Then Tonnel roar'd, and gied a girm,
 An' Tuncan loud did cry,

‘ Tid ye no lift tae grapple airn ?’
 ‘ Na, Tuncan, fait not I !’
 ‘ Come traws ’im now ; see Tam, my pairn,
 Te sailin’ we tid try ;
 Put Hielan’ poats no’ be say learn
 As sail when they pe ty,
 In a tark night.’

But Tam gat out wi’ birr an’ speed,
 Syne conn’d his Maker thanks,
 Wha frae sic danger had him freed,
 An’ set him on his shanks.
 Resolved anither course to tread,
 Nor trust mair to their pranks ;
 Sae curst their Hielan’ whisky-greed,
 An’ went on board a Manks,
 For Ayr neist day.”

David, as we have already stated, was fond of music ; and Burns, in his epistle already quoted, bears ample testimony to his practice as a violin player—

“ Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle” *—

but he appears to have had no talent whatever for song-writing. Among the few songs in his volume there is not one at all worthy of the smallest notice.

Though as far surpassed in his attempts to woo the muse, as he was exceeded by Burns in courting the *lasses* of Kyle, the Poems of David Sillar nevertheless bear the impress of intelligence, and of a mind considerably in advance of the mass around him. In the poem entitled “ Satan’s Complaint, or the Vision,” he vindicates the character of “ Auld Nick” in a manner which must have exposed him to considerable censure. In his epistle to Lapraik (for he also aspired to the honour of a correspondence with the unfortunate but facetious Bard of Muirkirk) he broaches subjects of a controversial nature, any thing but agreeable to the rigidly orthodox.

Dismissing the poetical lucubrations of Sillar, we shall endeavour to trace the author through the subsequent events of

* David Sillar was the composer of the air to which Burns wrote the words of “ A rose-bud by my early walk.”

his history. In writing to a friend about the year 1786, he says—

“ If wait on trade, I plainly see
That trade will then propitious be.”

“ Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee,” is the adage of Poor Richard; but to this, unfortunately, David did not adhere. The getting up of his volume abstracted his attention from business; and the ill success of his poetical adventure, tended so much to his ruin that he soon became bankrupt, and was incarcerated for the trifling sum of five pounds. In his extremity he wrote to one of his brothers, soliciting pecuniary assistance to that amount, but was refused. This circumstance is the more worthy of notice as it made a lasting impression on his mind, and was probably not without its influence in effecting a decided change in his disposition and feelings.

Shortly after his failure, David paid a visit to Edinburgh, with what view it is impossible to say; but, disappointed in his prospects in that quarter, he returned to Irvine, and there had recourse to his former profession of teacher. His school was for some time very thinly attended, his scholars consisting chiefly of grown up seamen who sought to be instructed in navigation—a branch of education in which his knowledge must have been for some time rather limited. Such was his application, however, that he gradually surmounted the difficulties with which he was surrounded; and, in the course of a few years, his school increased so much as to yield him an income of nearly a hundred pounds a-year.

His success in life was now established, but better fortune still awaited him. Besides himself, there were three other brothers of the Spittleside family, two elder and one younger. The eldest, Robert, left the farm at an early period to learn the business of soap-boiling with a relative, Mr James Gibb,* who commenced

* Mr Gibb was a native of Mauchline. He was a speculative, active, business sort of man, though not so fortunate in the world as might at one time have been expected from the extent and apparent prosperity of his transactions. He began business in Ayr as a grocer, and had his shop at the corner of the Fish Cross, where he latterly built the extensive premises now occupied by Mr George M^cTaggart. The soap-manufactory was at the Townhead of Ayr, in a range of old buildings on the right side of the road

an extensive establishment for the manufacture of that article at Ayr, about the year 1770. He afterwards proceeded to Liverpool, where, entering into business as a general merchant, he was so successful that John, the next brother, was soon induced to follow. In the course of a few years the two brothers engaged extensively in the trade with Africa, whither John latterly removed, to conduct their affairs in that quarter of the world; and thus, while the golden ball of fortune was at their feet, David was quietly but assiduously superintending his school, and enjoying the comforts of domestic life (for he had married soon after coming to Irvine,*) with a rising family of children surrounding the hearth. Extremely economical in his management, the embarrassments he had encountered, and the aid he had solicited in vain when on the brink of ruin and despair, seem to have inspired him with the resolution of acquiring a competency; and it is to this feeling, we doubt not, may be attributed the somewhat parsimonious habits of his after life.

On the death of his younger brother William, who had succeeded his father in the farm of Spittleside, the lease, of which a few years had still to run, besides a considerable sum of money, fell into the hands of David. Resolving, however, not to relin-

leading to Portpatrick. There are many curious anecdotes told of Mr Gibb, the authenticity of which, however, it would be difficult to substantiate. In the multiplicity of business in which his hands were engaged, his active and inventive intellect found ample scope; and it frequently required all his ingenuity to keep the machinery in motion. He was, we believe, more than once bankrupt; still he contrived to renew the struggle with fresh vigour, until, compelled to abandon his lofty speculations, he at length went to Liverpool, where he experienced great kindness from his old apprentice Mr Sillar, by whom he was left an annuity of one hundred pounds. One conspicuous monument of Mr Gibb's lofty dreamings still remains. We mean the splendid mansion-house in the immediate vicinity of the Townhead, now occupied by David Limond, Esq. of Dalblair. It was built by Mr Gibb about thirty years ago; and was then, and still is, by far the most elegant and capacious residence in the neighbourhood of Ayr. The building of the *palace* was undertaken in consequence of some money left him, or obtained from abroad. The plan, however, proved too magnificent for his means; and, we believe, he was never able fully to complete it. It is said, but for the truth of this we do not vouch, that he entertained the hope of connecting himself with the Peerage of Scotland, by obtaining the hand of a daughter of the Earl of Dumfries.

* He married a Mrs Kerr, whose maiden name was Margaret Gemmell, belonging to that town.

quish his school, he prudently contrived that Mrs Sillar* should spend the greater portion of her time at Spittleside, while he remained in Irvine, invariably repairing, however, on the Saturdays to the farm. This was but the beginning, as it were, of his good fortune. His brother John, who died in Africa some years before this, left a considerable sum in his favour; but owing to some intricacy in the affairs of the concern, in connection with his partner, a Mr Walker, it was in vain he sought for a settlement. In reply to his request for a statement, one was forwarded, from which it was made to appear that no balance was due. At length, however, about the year 1811, his elder brother Robert also died; and, as he had no children, the whole of his money and effects fell to David, after paying several annuities and a fixed sum to Dr Sillar, the only son of the latter. No one ever knew, as he was particularly cautious on the subject, what might be the amount of the fortune to which he succeeded, but it must have been considerable. The misunderstanding with the partner of John, on the death of that individual, came to be decided by arbitration, when the sum of £12,000, which had been locked up for so many years in Chancery, was divided betwixt David and the heirs of Mr Walker. Thus become rich as he began to border on advanced age, Mr Sillar abandoned the school immediately after the death of his elder brother.

Judging of him in his later life, few perhaps would have been inclined to coincide in the justice of the title of "the ace o' hearts" bestowed upon him by Burns; but circumstances are seldom without their influence in moulding the character of the individual; and the events to which we have alluded were calculated in no trifling degree to affect the natural current of his disposition, which was lively and social:—

“ For me my hairum-skairum head,
Mair stuffed wi' nonsense than wi' greed,

* By this time his first wife was dead. Mrs Sillar, *secundus*, was a sister of the late John Bryan, of the Sun Inn, Kilmarnock, who was an admirable specimen of the well-bred landlord of the old school. He was extensively known, and highly respected by all classes of the community.

Wad never halt to win my bread,
 But rin a-bizin',
 Convoy'd through life by rhyme an' need
 Ayont twa dizen."

In allusion to the want of success which attended his early exertions, he has been frequently heard to say, that five pounds from his brother at the time of his incarceration, would have done him more good than all the wealth he had afterwards left him. Those who knew Mr Sillar intimately, speak of him as a man of stern justice; sometimes *generous*, though not ostentatious in the bestowal of his benevolence. The only *public* bequests he is known to have made were two donations, of £50 each, at different periods, to the Academy of Irvine, by which he became a director of that institution for life.

On the subject of his good fortune, he remarked that "many will now be inclined to take me by the hand, who would not look to me before. It is not to me they pay court, but to the money; but those who were my friends before shall be my friends still." And it is said he kept his word in this respect. With an old brother of the *taws*—a Mr Montgomery—he was in the habit of meeting every Saturday afternoon, to enjoy a game or two at draughts. Should any thing have prevented the pastime on that particular day, he was sure to make up for the interruption on some other occasion.

It may be imagined, from his character in later life, that he had entirely abandoned the company of the tuneful Nine as unprofitable. This was not the case, however; once perpetrate the crime of authorship, and it is impossible to eradicate the *cacoethes scribendi*. To record his thoughts upon passing events, and embody the workings of his fancy in poetic numbers, was with him a favourite amusement; but we are not aware that any of his more recent productions were ever communicated to the public. Next to the pleasure of composing, was the gratification he experienced in reading his effusions to a few select friends. Much of his time was also devoted to music—the *dulcimer* being his favourite instrument; and nothing gave him greater delight than to engage with a friend in discussing the contents of a jug

of toddy by his parlour fire, telling old tales, or rummaging over his manuscripts.

Mr Sillar used to take considerable credit to himself for never having attended public worship in any place in Irvine but the Established Church, except on two occasions. His friend, Mrs Stewart of Afton Lodge, had requested him to send her some account of the Buchanites, who were at that time making considerable noise in Irvine: he accordingly attended their meetings for two evenings. Mr Whyte, who had observed him taking notes, addressed him at the close of the service, and said he hoped the notes had been taken in the spirit they were given. Sillar replied that the notes were taken with the design of giving information to a friend, and begged Mr Whyte to look over them to see if they were correct. Mr Whyte did so, and said they were fairly taken. Sillar regretted much that he had not retained copies of these letters, as he could never recover the originals.*

It will readily be conceived that he was proud of his intimacy with Burns, on whose account his company was courted by strangers of every degree of rank. Among others who sought his friendship was Lieut. Charles Gray, himself a poet of more than common attainments. The Lieutenant had previously addressed the following lines to him:—

“ EPISTLE TO MR DAVID SILLAR, IRVINE.

*This freedom in an unknown frien’,
I pray excuse.—BURNS.*

Will *Burns*’, late frien’ an’ bosom cronic,
List to my lays, tho’ far frae bonnie?
Will he, wha lives fu’ euthe and snug,
To a poor wand’rer lend his lug?
Wha langsyne left his native plains,
(Land o’ ait-cakes, an’ cantie strains,
An’ ventured on the pathless ocean
In hopes o’ honour, fame, promotion:—
Let Cynics dull this passion blame,
Wha wou’dna wish to leave—a name!

* Some account of the Buchanites will be found in the Appendix.

Will he, wha strays 'mang hills and woods,
 List to a rhymer on the floods,
 Whar *Adria* pours her foamin' tides,
 An' swift the stately vessel glides,
 Near rough, rude mountains theek'd wi' snaw,
 That simmer suns can hardly thaw ;
 Whar savage beasts prow for their prey,
 An' men almost as wild as they ?—
 Yet sometimes am I wafted o'er,
 Near famed *Italia's* flowery shore,
 Where all the Muses sung of yore ;
 But fient a ane e'er visits me—
 Aiblins they dinna like the sea !
 An' hark ye, lad, (tho' dinna tell,)
 They like it nae waur than mysel' ;
 For, gin I cou'd but better do,
 Saut water ne'er shou'd weet my shoe.

But, Davie, if, in twa-three year,
 Peace shou'd return ilk heart to cheer,
 Back to Auld *Scotia* quick I'll flie,
 Her cakes an' usquebae to pric ;
 The auld thack house I'll clead ance mair,
 An' whiten weel the outer stair,
 An' mak' the inside snug an' bein,
 For weel I like to see things clean :
 An' nae attention shall be spared
 To cultivate the green kail-yard ;
 I'll plant my cabbage an' potatoes,
 An' be anither *Cincinnatus* !
 Nae mair shall Turkish, turban'd lown
 Pelt me wi' stanes out o' his town ;*
 The Fifan plain, the Frith o' Forth,
 Shall bind me to the hardy North.
 Tho' here they boast the elust'ring vine,
 An' fill their goblets high wi' wine ;
 Tho' bounteous *Ceres* swells their sheaves,
 Poor devils ! at the best they're slaves !

O leeze me on thee, *Scotia* auld !
 Though gowks may say ye're bleak an' cauld,
 Your soil, be't e'er sac thin or bare,
 Fair Freedom's plant aye blossoms there ;

* The author and another officer belonging to his Majesty's ship, *Unite*, having strayed into a remote part of the city of Constantinople, were pelted with stones by some of the inhabitants.

Your mountains too are steep an' hie,
 Yet on their taps there grows a tree
 Whase sacred name is—*Libertie* !
 An' though our bev'rage is but whisky,
 Thank G-d, we drink it free an' frisky ;
 An' tho' we pay right weel in taxes,
 Nae tyrant e'er our purse-neck raxes ;
 Our barley fields, then, wha'd resign
 To live a slave aneath a vine ?
 Gif i' the warld lurks sic a knave,
 He weel deserves to be a slave !

Your cronie, Will,* is hale an' weel,
 Dealin' his blister, drug, an' peel ;
 In short, we'd be ill aff without him,
 He's nae *Sangrado* tricks about him,
 Nor like *Jock Hornbook* i' the Clachan,
 Wha set e'en Death himsel' a-laughin' ;
 But he wi' care o' ilka creature
 Aids an' assists auld Madam Nature ;
 An' Nature, Davie, let me tell
 Is nae bad doctor o' hersel' .
 I'm unco proud to ca' him frien',
 An' aft we walk the deck at e'en ;
 There, aften to beguile the time,
 I rant him owre a blaud o' rhyme,
 Frae chiels wha weel cou'd tune the reed,
 An' still delight us, tho' they're dead ;
 An' sometimes, whan our humour's frisky,
 I rane owre ' The Effects o' Whisky ;'
 How *Tuncan* set the flowin' sail,
 An' spread it wide to catch the gale ;
 But, swiggin' deeply at the tankard,
Tonnel forgot the boat was anchor'd :
 Sae toss'd an' tumbled a' the night,
 Which put the packman in a fright ;
 Whan mornin' cam' they gae a girn,
 An' drew on board ' the grapple airn ;'
 An' tauld poor Tam, ' tho' we tid try,
 Our poats no learn to sail when ty !'

Sometimes Auld *Scotia* is our theme,
 An' a' the frien's we left at hame ;

* The friend of Mr Sillar here alluded to was a William Bryan, a brother's son of his wife. He was originally brought up to the business of a carpenter, but afterwards became a surgeon. He died on board a man-of-war, leaving about £500.

That subject never fails to please,
 What airt soever blows the breeze ;
 Gude keep them a' frae want an' harm,
 We aften pray wi' hearts fu' warm :
 For *Willie* is (tho' somewhat bluff)
 A piece o' Nature's sterling stuff,
 An', for his frien's and country's weel,
 Wad brave, Gude save's ! the vera Diel.

When storms arise, and wild winds blow,
 We often 'stagger to and fro ;'
 Oft, while the sons of lux'ry sleep,
 We 'view the wonders of the deep ;'
 When o'er our heads fly dark thick clouds,
 And howling winds roar thro' the shrouds,
 The vessel hangs high on the wave,
 Then sinks—as in a yawning grave ;
 Anon she mounts—and reels amain
 On the huge wave—then sinks again ;
 When billows threaten to o'erwhelm,
 The seaman at the guiding helm,
 With steady care the ship control,
 So firm and dauntless is each soul !

Oft, in its dreariest darkest form.
 Have I enjoy'd the rising storm,
 Beheld the waves roll mountain high,
 Commix with clouds, and cleave the sky :
 The mind then quits mean things below,
 And feels Devotion's warmest glow ;
 Upward the raptured soul ascends
 To Him, who rides on viewless winds,
 Who bids the raging ocean roar,
 And foaming lash the rocky shore ;
 Who sends the whirlwind fierce abroad,
 And stills the tempest with a nod !

* * *

*H. M. Ship Unite, Adriatic, }
 Dec. 31, 1803."* }

Gray repeatedly visited Irvine ; and, along with Sillar, frequently attended the annual dinner of the Burns' Club in that town.*

Though he loved to dwell on the memory of the Poet, it is

* The Lieutenant, who is well known in the Kingdom of Fife, is still alive and hearty. He was one of those who dined in honour of the Poet in the Regent Hotel, Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, on the 25th of January last (1839.)

mentioned that when David Sillar was called upon to subscribe for the erection of the monument on the banks of Doon, he replied—"I cannot well do so. You starved him when alive, and you cannot with good grace erect a monument to him now!"* He contributed freely, however, in honouring the Bard in many other respects, both by his pen and otherwise. He was exceedingly displeased at Lockhart's life of Burns, and wrote a reply or criticism on the work, the substance of which, we believe, appeared in the *Quarterly Review*. He also furnished two letters respecting his early friendship with Burns, from one of which we quoted the extract given at the beginning of this article.

There are a few characteristic anecdotes told of Mr Sillar. At one of the annual evening parties given on the election of the Magistrates and Town-Council, the Rev. Mr Campbell gave as a toast "The medical profession," which was immediately replied to. This was followed by another—"The learned legal profession;" after which a dead pause ensued, in expectation that some one of the legal gentlemen present would acknowledge the honour paid to the body. At length, when the patience of the company was nearly worn out, Sillar rose, and with much solemnity of manner briefly addressed the chair—"May I be permitted a few words. One toast has been given, and an appropriate reply was elicited; but another has been proposed, which no one has volunteered to acknowledge. I suppose the profession are *consulting* as to which of them should reply, none of the learned body being fond of speaking without a *fee*!"

David Sillar was himself a member of the Town-Council of Irvine, and held the office of a magistrate for about two years. During that period he attempted various reforms in connection with the burgh, but these were chiefly of a trifling nature. He examined with characteristic narrowness into accounts, and was careful that every thing appertaining to the public institutions should be gone about with caution and economy. While in the magistracy, a drunken pauper belonging to the town came up to him one day on the street, and took hold of his arm, saying she had a cause to bring before him. The Bailie, not wishing to be troubled with her, gave her a push; and, being much intoxicated, she

This is wrong. In the "Ain Advertiser" (25th Feb. 18
Sillar's name appears as a subscriber for 50
guineas, and Dr. Mackenzie's for two guineas
He was economical but not parsimonious.

Amk

fell and broke her collar-bone. Refusing to comply with an exorbitant demand for damage sustained by the pauper, a prosecution was raised against him, which cost him upwards of £200. He used to say afterwards that he had been made to subscribe pretty handsomely to one charity, but he should take care that he should not subscribe to another. The pauper herself said that she would have been as well with the offer made her by the Bailie as with all she got by the prosecution.

When presiding one day in the Small Debt Court, a cause came before the Court from a neighbouring parish, in which a medical gentleman was pursuer and the Kirk-Session defenders. The surgeon, who had been called to attend a pauper belonging to the parish, and had performed an operation which was the means of saving the person's life, claimed remuneration. The Session resisted the claim, and the minister pleaded that justice did not demand of them to provide medical aid to their poor, and that there was no law to compel them to do so. The Court sustained the plea, and the Bailie, in addressing the minister, said—"The decision is given in your favour; but the coat that you wear, and the office you hold, lead me to hope that your law and your justice will in future be tempered with mercy."

In politics, David might latterly be considered a moderate Whig. At one period of his life, during the French Republican war, he was, to use his own phrase, "politically mad," being in the receipt of twelve or thirteen newspapers weekly for himself alone. The enthusiasm of this period, however, gradually subsided; and latterly his attention was almost entirely withdrawn from politics. He used to say that he had "now got out of politics, and he was determined to keep himself so."

David Sillar died at Irvine, after an illness of some duration, on the 2d of May 1830, in the seventieth year of his age. In stature he was of the middle size; of a fair complexion, slightly marked by the small-pox, and very near-sighted. All his manuscripts, we believe, were destroyed before or immediately after his death. By his first wife he had several children. One of his sons, Patrick, was a midshipman, and died at Surinam. The only remaining member of the family is Dr Sillar of Liverpool.

WILLIAM SIMPSON,

OF OCHILTREE.

THE poetical effusions of WILLIAM SIMPSON have never been given to the public ; yet, as a “ rhyme-composing brither,” he is well entitled to a place among the Contemporaries of Burns. He was eldest son of Mr John Simpson, farmer in Ten-Pound Land, in the vicinity of the village of Ochiltree, where his ancestors had been located for several generations. He was educated for the Church ; but a vacancy occurring in the parish school, he accepted the appointment of teacher, and held the situation at the time his correspondence began with the Poet. “ He *was*,” says Cunningham, “ and *is still*, schoolmaster of the parish of Ochiltree ; he has performed carefully the duties of his station, and lives respected by his scholars, some of whom are to be found in the east as well as in the west.” The gifted editor of the “ Songs of Scotland” has been here led into a very great mistake, for William Simpson died more than twenty years ago. He was at the time teacher of the parish school of Cunnock, having removed there as far back as the year 1788. He was succeeded in Ochiltree by his brother, to whom the observations of Cunningham literally apply. Mr Patrick Simpson is a man above seventy-three years of age,* but comparatively stout and healthy, and exceedingly communicative on the subject of his brother’s correspondence with Burns, though it is rather surprising he should never have been consulted by any of the commentators on the works of the Poet.

He is proud of having been the first who, in 1783, brought to the parish of Ochiltree a copy, which he procured in Kilmarnock,

* Mr Simpson’s mother, Margaret Paterson, died in 1819, aged ninety-two. Ochiltree, we are informed, is favourable to longevity ; it is not long since there existed in the village six individuals, whose united ages exceeded five hundred years.

of the "Twa Herds"—a poem submitted anonymously to the public by Burns,* some time prior to the publication of his first edition. It was the perusal of this piece, having some knowledge of its author, that induced William Simpson to pen a poetical epistle† to Burns, to which the latter made the following well-known reply:—

“ TO W. S*****N, OCHILTREE.

May 1785.

I gat your letter, winsome Willie;
 Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
 Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
 An' unco vain,
 Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,
 Your flatt'rin' strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it,
 I sud be laith to think ye hinted
 Ironic satire, sidelins sklentid
 On my poor Music;
 Tho' in sic phraisin' terms ye've penn'd it,
 I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
 Should I but dare a hope to speel
 Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
 The braes o' fame;
 Or Fergusson, the writer-chief,
 A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
 I'll suited law's dry musty arts!
 My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
 Ye E'nbrugh gentry!
 The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes,
 Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
 Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
 As whyles they're like to be my dead,
 (O sad disease!)

* "This," says Mr Simpson, "occurred in April 1783, three years before the publication of his Poems."

† This Epistle unfortunately has not been preserved.

While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray:
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang dark night.

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her
Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
An' no think lang;
O sweet to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive,
Let me fair Nature's face describe,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy grumblin' hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, ' my rhyme-composing brither!'
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither;
Now let us lay our heads thegither
In love fraternal:
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls and taxes;
While moorlan' herds like gude fat braxies;
While terra firma on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In Robert Burns."*

The acquaintance of Burns and William Simpson was not con-

* A Postscript is added to this Epistle, but the above is sufficient for our purpose.

fined to epistolary intercourse ; they had many personal meetings, and that they were on terms of the closest friendship will appear from the following circumstances :—At a place called the Poole, not far from Ochiltree, lived Thomas Walker, tailor, a person gifted, if not with the genius, at least with the knaek, of rhyme. With this individual, as “ birds of a feather flock together,” Mr Simpson was intimate, and no doubt had told him of the epistle he had received from Burns. Ambitious of a similar honour, Walker wrote the following letter, which has been published in several editions of the Poet’s works :—

“ EPISTLE FROM A TAILOR TO ROBERT BURNS.

What waefu’ news is this I hear,
 Frae greeting I can scarce forbear,
 Folks tell me ye’re gaun aff this year
 Out owre the sea,
 And lasses, wham ye lo’e sac dear,
 Will greet for thee.

Weel wad I like war ye to stay,
 But, Robin, since ye will away,
 I hae a word yet mair to say,
 And maybe twa :
 May He protect us night an’ day,
 That made us a’.

Whare art thou gaun, keep mind frae me,
 Seek Him to bear thee companie,
 And, Robin, whan ye come to die,
 Ye’ll won aboon,
 An’ live at peace an’ unity
 Ayont the moon.

Some tell me, Rab, ye dinna fear
 To get a wean, an’ curse an’ swear,
 I’m unco wae, my lad, to hear
 O’ sic a trade :
 Could I persuade ye to forbear,
 I wad be glad.

Fu’ weel ye ken ye’ll gang to ——,
 Gin ye persist in doing ill—
 Waes me ! ye’re hurlin’ down the hill
 Withouten dread.

An' ye'll get leave to swear your fill
After ye're dead.

There, walth o' women ye'll get near,
But gettin' weans ye will forbear,
Ye'll never say, my bonnie dear
Come, gie's a kiss—
Nae kissing there—ye'll girn an' sneer,
An' ither hiss.

O Rab! lay by thy foolish tricks,
An' steer nae mair the female sex,
Or some day ye'll come through the pricks,
An' that ye'll see :
Ye'll find hard living wi' Auld Nicks ;
I'm wae for thee.

But what's this comes wi' sic a knell,
Amaist as loud as ony bell,
While it does mak' my conscience tell
Me what is true,
I'm but a ragget cowl mysel',
Owre sib to you !

We're owre like those wha think it fit
To stuff their noddles fu' o' wit,
An' yet content in darkness sit,
Wha shun the light,
To let them see down to the pit,
That lang dark night.

But fareweel, Rab, I maun awa',
May He that made us keep us a',
For that wad be a dreadful fa'
And hurt us sair ;
Lad, we wad never mend awa,
Sae, Rab, tak' care."

Tom was a burgher ; and, though a Poet, was a respectable, honest individual, and a man of piety ; hence the strain in which he chose to lecture the Bard. The tailor's epistle had been despatched for several weeks, and still no answer from Burns. What could be the matter ? Had his Bardship taken the well-meant advice amiss ? In vain did Walker attempt to account for the silence of the Poet, and he had more than once expressed his surprise to his friend William Simpson, who had seen the production before it was forwarded to Mosgiel. The school-

master, who appears to have been a wit in his way, immediately conceived the idea of working on the credulity of the tailor, and of enjoying a laugh at his expense. He accordingly evoked the Muse, and produced the following reply:—

“ What ails ye now, ye lousie ——,
 To thresh my back at sic a pitch?
 Losh man! hae mercy wi’ your natch,
 Your bodkin’s bauld,
 I didna suffer half sae much
 Frac Daddie Auld.

What tho’ at times when I grow crouse,
 I crack wi’ lassies ben the house,
 Is that enough for you to souse
 Your servant sac?
 Gae mind your seam, ye prick the louse
 An’ jag the flae.

King David, o’ poetic brief,
 Wrought ’mang the lasses sic mischief
 As fill’d his after life wi’ grief
 An’ bloody rants,
 An’ yet he’s rank’d amang the chief
 O’ langsyne saunts.

An’ maybe, Tam, for a’ my cants,
 My wicked rhymes, an’ drucken rants,
 I’ll gie auld cloven Clottie’s haunts
 An unco slip yet,
 An’ snugly sit amang the saunts
 At Davie’s hip yet.

But, fegs, the Session says I maun
 Gae fa’ upo’ anither plan,
 Than garrin’ lasses cowp the cran
 Clean heels owre body,
 And sairly thole their mither’s ban
 Afore the howdy.

This leads me on to tell for sport,
 How I did with the Session sort—
 Auld Clinkum at the inner port,
 Cried three times, ‘ Robin!
 Come hither lad, an’ answer for’t,
 Ye’re blamed for jobbin’.

Wi’ pinch I put a Sunday’s face on,
 An’ snoov’d awa’ before the Session—

I made an open fair confession,
I scorn'd to lie ;
An' syne Mess John, beyond expression,
Fell foul o' me." *

To this Mr Simpson appended the signature of " Robert Burns," and despatched it to the tailor at Poole. Though he may have been supposed to smart under the castigation, Tom Walker was excessively proud of the imagined reply of Burns, and lost no time in walking over to Ochiltree, to show the Dominie the epistle. It required all the gravity of the latter to prevent a disclosure. He succeeded, however; and it is questionable whether the tailor was ever apprized of the true author of the reply. Certainly the public is not aware of it. Happening to meet Burns not long after this, Simpson informed him of the liberty he had taken with his name. " You did well," said the Poet, laughing; " you have thrashed the tailor much better than I could have done."

The two foregoing epistles have found their way into several editions of the works of Burns. The reply is invariably published as a genuine production of the Poet; and it has been even surmised that the letter of the tailor was also his composition. The world, though it may be sceptical, is now in possession of the real history of the epistles: the one, the effusion of Thomas Walker, tailor; the other, of William Simpson, schoolmaster at that time in Ochiltree. Besides the direct testimony of Mr Patrick Simpson, there are various circumstances corroborative of the fact. None of the epistles appear either in the first, second, or yet in Currie's edition of Burns, though it is possible they might have been withheld from insertion in the latter on the same principle that constrained the editor to suppress many other pieces, even of acknowledged merit. They were first published in a Glasgow edition, printed in 1801, 8vo, along with the cantata of the Jolly Beggars, which was then given to the public for the first time.

In reviewing the " Reliques of Burns," in 1809, the *Quarterly*

* Five verses describing the Poet's interview with the Kirk-Session and the conversation that took place, we consider rather immodest for insertion.

incidentally alluded to the Glasgow edition in such terms of commendation as to rouse the indignation of Cromek, who, in his selection of "Scottish Songs,"* refers to the epistles of Walker and Simpson in a strain of disparagement not altogether warranted. After reciting a verse of the "Epistle of a Tailor," he asks—"Is this the poetry of Robert Burns?" "Then follows," he adds, "what is *called* Robert Burns' answer to the aforesaid tailor." Cromek appears to have judged correctly—neither the one epistle nor the other is "the poetry of Burns."

The two pieces by William Simpson, already given, are not the only effusions preserved of his muse. He was a man of education, with no inconsiderable turn for poetry; but he constantly resisted the temptation to appear before the world as an author. Burns urged him to publish at the same time with himself—

" But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best."

Willie, however, would not answer to the call of his brother Poet, at least in the manner recommended. His answer was—"I write for amusement, and will never consent to publish for profit." Besides several translations, William Simpson left a MS. volume of original pieces, now in possession of his brother, the worthy schoolmaster of Ochiltree, to whom we are indebted for one or two specimens of the muse of "Winsome Willie."

The following verses were addressed to "Tom Walker," the tailor, who on one occasion had been complaining of the absence of the Muses. The Dominic thus satirically invokes the coy daughters of Jupiter in his friend's behalf:—

" Ye Muses! why leave ye Tom Walker so long?
His rhyme's unconnected
Show he's disrespected
By you, ye inspirers of elegant song;
For, to my vexation,
His versification, is frequently wrong.

* *Select Scottish Songs, ancient and modern; with Critical Observations and Biographical Notices, by Robert Burns. Edited by Robert Cromek, F.R.S. Edin. and London. 1810. 2 vols. 12mo.*

With aspect propitious ye smile upon Burns—
 His versification
 Gives strong indication
 Ye're naeway averse to indelicate turns ;
 Or rather than help him,
 Ye surely wad skelp him, and shorten his horns.

Perhaps, ye daft limmers, if Tom should compoë
 Rhymes rude, rough, and witty,
 Immodest and smutty—
 Or should he the clerical foibles expose—
 O then, in his folly,
 Perhaps ye wad wholly help Tom to compose !

But far be it from him he ere should allow
 A subject so awful,
 Immodest, unlawful ;
 If soberly none can find favour from you,
 His voice rather chooses
 To bid you, ye Muses, a final adieu.

For Tom is a Burgher, so dare not avow
 One single expression
 Against that profession,
 Whose characteristic's the famous true blue
 Of old Orthodoxy,
 Faced up with good practice, our lives thro' an' thro'.

P.S. I send up these lines by J. W. from the school.
 To you, Mr Walker, *head tailor* in Poole,
 Who makes on the Muses this mournful complaint,
 Because they look on your productions asquint ;*
 While off to Mosgiel from Parnassus they canter
 Whenever *Rob Burns* but plays cheep on his chanter."

* * * *

Another specimen of Simpson's poetic vein. The subject is "Tom Walker" again, to whom he thus writes in condolence :—

“ TO TOM WALKER IN AFFLICTION.

In sympathy your servant, Will,
 Begs leave to occupy his quill,
 Inquiring how ye fen' :

* The tailor's vision was not the most *direct*. He used to say he could fix the one eye on the seam and look about him with the other.

WILLIAM SIMPSON.

Since trouble haunts your little ha',
 Nae doubt ye're heartless ane an' a';
 Nevertheless I ken
 Ye're nae sae very scant o' grace,
 Whate'er 's the dispensation,
 As ere set up your *squinting face*
 An' fret at tribulation.
 No, no Tam, ye know Tam,
 Whate'er 's our present plaint,
 Sin brocht it, nor ocht it
 To raise our discontent.

Though life's a pilgrimage, you know,
 Thick interspersed with weel and woe;
 For we're sic feeble creatures,
 Prosperity we downa thole,
 Adversity is on the whole
 Repugnant to our natures.
 The first sae feeds inherent pride,
 We clean misken oursel';
 The last's a dark, black-rolling tide,
 Whose origin is hell.
 Kind Heaven has given
 A life devoid of neither,
 But mix'd them, and fix'd them,
 In human life together.

Then why should creatures such as we
 Presume to fret at Heaven's decree,
 Because on poortith's brink;
 Sure, whether we are great and rich,
 Or mean and poor, it mak's na much,
 This life is but a blink.
 Swift are our days, as shuttles fly,
 Impatient of control,
 Till some auld sexton by-and-by
 Maun hide us in a hole.
 Earth's treasures, life's pleasures,
 Will then avail us little;
 Scots rhyme then, though prime then,
 Will no be worth a spittle.

What signifies the world's applause,
 Its giddy shouts and loud huzzas?
 What though the vulgar throng,
 And round our temples twine the bays
 For youth-corrupting fulsome lays,
 If virtue calls them wrong?

One hour of conscious innocence
 Yields much more real bliss,
 Than years of pleasure at expenso
 Of inward happiness.
 Now therefore, Tom, wherefore
 Should bards devote their skill,
 Inditing and writing
 Rhymes bordering on ill.

Hence I'll abjure the fabled Nine,
 And graciously His aid divine
 I humbly will implore,
 Who taught old David, Israel's king,
 In heavenly strains to play and sing,
 Jehovah to adore ;
 Who brought him up from tending sheep,
 His early occupation,
 And set him on his throne to keep
 Watch o'er his elect nation.
 Attend me, defend me,
 Thou Being all divine ;
 Inspire me, and fire me,
 With sentiments sublime."

Tom Walker felt the allusion to his optics somewhat keenly ; and, attributing the introduction of a subject so unpalatable to the instigation of a third party, he replied in the following quatrain:—

" For a' the Kirkland's e'er was born,
 Had but my case been yours,
 I wadna planted sic a thorn
 Amang sic bonnie flowers." *

In the recent edition of the works of Burns, by the Messrs Chambers, it is stated that Simpson was the author of " a humorous elegy on the death of Paul I." The following are the verses alluded to :—

" THE EMPEROR PAUL'S FLIGHT TO PANDEMONIUM.

The Emperor Paul was a plague to us all,
 And excited the wrath of our navy ;
 But the moment he found we had weather'd the Sound,
 For shelter fled down to Sir Davie, auld Davie ;
 Plump downward to dainty auld Davie.†

* Some farther notice of Tom Walker and his productions occurs in a subsequent sketch.

† In allusion to *Davie's locker*—a sea term for death.

Says Davie, what haste? ye seem to be chased;
 Ay, chased wi' a witness, says Paul, sir:
 Lord Nelson's got round, having weather'd the Sound,
 In spite of their powder and ball, sir, and all, sir,
 Yon forts and strong batteries all, sir.

Of Chroningberg fort he just made a sport;
 He laugh'd at yon isles and flotillas;
 As eagles would hens, he scatter'd the Dances,
 And sank all their craft in the billows, poor fellows,
 Quito tumbled them under the billows.

Our friends on the deep now daurna play peep,
 Afraid of some horrible evil;
 For the story goes round, from the Nile to the Sound,
 That Nelson of Bront is a devil—sea devil;
 For his prowess proclaims him a devil.

Since poor Copenhagen his Lordship is flegging,
 With grape, bomb, and ball, helter-skelter;
 Despoil'd of my rest, I dived from my nest
 Plump down to your regions, for shelter, grant shelter;
 O, Davie, do grant me some shelter!

Says Davie to Paul, be easy, poor saul,
 You are safe and as welcome's a brither;
 Come ben—tak' a seat by your mammie, auld Kate:
 What a chance you wan down to your mither, safe hither!
 What a comfort to Kate, your auld mither!"

The character of Paul—his short and eccentric career—the coalition of the Northern Powers (which led to the destruction of Copenhagen)—and his undisguised hostility to Britain, are matters of history. Disapproving of his Government, and foreseeing the difficulties into which his policy was likely to lead the nation, he was violently put to death by his courtiers on the 23d March 1801.*

We might select from the MSS. of William Simpson at greater length; but the foregoing extracts, we believe, will be sufficient to show that, in claiming for the schoolmaster of Ochiltree the "Reply" usually attributed to Burns, we are not unprepared to substantiate his possession of poetical talents at least equal to the merit of that production. Simpson died in 1815, much

* A very curious likeness of him will be found in the Appendix to "Kay's Edinburgh Portraits," published in two volumes, quarto, by Hugh Paton. 1838.

regretted by all who knew him. He had discharged the onerous duties of a public teacher upwards of forty years; and in Cumnock, where he officiated the greater part of that time, his memory is still much respected by many who were his pupils.

Here we might close our brief memoir; but we cannot do so without adverting once more to his surviving brother, Mr Patrick Simpson, whom Cunningham, Hogg, and others, in their notes to Burns, have erroneously identified as the "winsome Willie" of the Poet's epistle. He began to teach in a private family in the parish of Ochiltree, at Martinmas 1777, but had not the charge of a public school till 1783, when he was appointed teacher at Straiton, in Carrick. In 1788, as formerly mentioned, he succeeded his brother in Ochiltree. In 1833, Mr Simpson, on completing his fiftieth year as a parochial teacher, was honoured with a jubilee dinner; and had the satisfaction of seeing around him many to whom he had imparted the first rudiments of education. He has consequently been now nearly fifty-six years a public teacher. Though upwards of seventy-three years of age, we have seldom been more gratified than in the enjoyment of his company. Full of anecdote, and stored with tales innumerable of the "olden time," he is happy in the society of the young, to whom his stories are ever new. He sings, too, with admirable spirit; and his recitations, especially of his brother's compositions, are executed with incomparable *naivete*. He has himself committed the sin of rhyme, though he does not aspire to the title of Poet.* Mr Simpson is well known for his superiority as a

* Having been applied to by an old woman of the name of Sloan to draw out a petition for her, the schoolmaster produced the following one in rhyme:—

“ To her very kind friends
 Lord Glenlee's lands upon,
 The following petition
 Of old Janet Sloan,
 Doth humbly show
 That to frailty and age,
 She has draw'd out her life
 To an advanced stage.
 Tho' in means of subsistence
 She often is scant,

Latin scholar. In the absence of the late Sir Alexander Boswell, Bart., he used to correct the proof-sheets of the Auchinleck press, especially reprints of old authors.

//////////

JANET LITTLE.

THE SCOTTISH MILKMAID.

JANET LITTLE, though not a native of Ayrshire, passed the greater part of her days in the county; and on that account, as well as from the many associations connected with her name, ought not to be omitted among the Contemporaries of Burns. She was the daughter of George Little, in Nether Bogside, near Ecclefechan, in Dumfries-shire, and was born in 1759, the same year which welcomed home the immortal Bard of Coila. The day of her birth is not stated in the session records; but she appears

She ne'er yet has been
 Quite in absolute want.
 From good folks like you,
 Who have something to spare,
 And kind hearts to bestow it,
 She has aye got a share:

For which she is thankful,
 And begs to present
 Her petition to you
 When paying your rent,
 That of her you'll be mindful,
 As you've been heretofore,
 And she'll ne'er cease to pray
 May the Lord bless your store."

This off-hand effusion of Mr Patrick Simpson, presented by the old woman to Mr Watson, one of his lordship's tenants, was productive of the desired effect—all of them having contributed liberally to the "Petition of old Janet Sloan."



LONDON CASTLE.

Engr. Hugh Hunt, Rev. Maynard's Carver & Gilber, 1830

to have been baptized on the 13th of August. Her parents were not in circumstances to afford her more than a common education; but she was early distinguished for her superior capacity and love of reading. Shortly after entering into service, Janet was fortunate in obtaining a situation in the house of the Rev. Mr Johnstone, where she continued for several years, greatly respected by the family. She afterwards accompanied the children of that gentleman to Glasgow, whither they were removed for their education; and from thence was taken into the employ of Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop, the patroness of Burns. From Dunlop-house she subsequently went to Loudoun Castle, along with the aunt of Sir John Dunlop, Bart., Mrs Hendrie, who, after the death of the Earl of Loudoun in 1786, rented the Castle for a number of years. Here Janet took charge as superintendent of the dairy; hence her cognomen of "the Scottish milkmaid."

Janet had early become a votary of the Muse; but there can be no doubt that the fame of Burns, of whom she heard so much at Dunlop-house, tended greatly to fan the flame for poetic distinction. That she admired the genius of the rustic Bard with the most disinterested enthusiasm, is testified by her conduct on more than one occasion. She had not had the pleasure of seeing him; but resolving on paying, in appropriate coin, her meed of approbation to one who by his genius had contributed so much to her mental enjoyment, she ventured on opening a correspondence by the following epistle:—

" Loudoun House, 12th July 1789.

SIR,

Though I have not the happiness of being personally acquainted with you, yet, amongst the number of those who have read and admired your publications, I may be permitted to trouble you with this. You must know, Sir, I am somewhat in love with the Muses, though I cannot boast of any favours they have deigned to confer upon me as yet; my situation in life has been very much against me as to that. I have spent some years in and about Ecclefechan (where my parents reside) in the station of a servant, and am now come to Loudoun House, at present possessed by Mrs Hendrie: she is daughter to Mrs Dunlop of

Dunlop, whom I understand you are particularly acquainted with. As I had the pleasure of perusing your poems, I felt a partiality for the author, which I should not have experienced had you been in a more dignified station. I wrote a few verses of address to you, which I did not then think of ever presenting ; but as fortune seems to have favoured me in this, by bringing me into a family by whom you are well known and much esteemed, and where perhaps I may have an opportunity of seeing you, I shall, in hopes of your future friendship, take the liberty to transcribe them.

Fair fa' the honest rustic swain,
 The pride o' a' our Scottish plain :
 Thou gies us joy to hear thy strain,
 And notes sae sweet :
 Old Ramsay's shade revived again
 In thee we greet.

Loved Thalia, that delightful muse,
 Seem'd lang shut up as a recluse ;
 To all she did her aid refuse
 Since Allan's day,
 Till Burns arose, then did she choose
 To grace his lay.

To hear thy sang all ranks desire,
 Sae weel you strike the dormant lyre ;
 Apollo with poetic fire
 Thy breast does warm,
 And critics silently admire
 Thy art to charm.

Cæsar and Luath weel can speak,
 'Tis pity e'er their gabs should steek,
 But into human nature keek,
 And knots unravel :
 To hear their lectures once a-week,
 Nine miles I'd travel.

Thy dedication to G. H.,
 An' unco bonnie hamespun speech,
 Wi' winsome glee the heart can teach
 A better lesson,
 Than servile bards who fan and flecch
 Like beggar's messan.

When slighted love becomes your theme,
 And woman's faithless vows you blame,

With so much pathos you exclaim,
 In your Lament ;
 But glanced by the most rigid dame,
 She would relent.

The daisy, too, ye sing wi' skill,
 And weel ye praise the whisky gill :
 In vain I blunt my feckless quill
 Your fame to raise ;
 While Echo sounds from ilka hill
 To Burns's praise.

Did Addison or Pope but hear,
 Or Sam, that critic most severe,
 A ploughboy sing with throat sac clear,
 They in a rage
 Their works would a' in piccees tear,
 And curse your page.

Sure Milton's eloquence were faint
 The beauties of your verse to paint :
 My rude unpolish'd strokes but taint
 Their brilliancy ;
 Th' attempt would doubtless vex a saint,
 And weel may thee.

The task I'll drop—with heart sincere
 To Heaven present my humble pray'r,
 That all the blessings mortals share
 May be by turns
 Dispensed by an indulgent care,
 To Robert Burns !

Sir—I hope you will pardon my boldness in this : my hand trembles while I write to you, conscious of my unworthiness of what I would most earnestly solicit, viz. your favour and friendship ; yet, hoping you will show yourself possessed of as much generosity and good nature as will prevent your exposing what may justly be found liable to censure in this measure, I shall take the liberty to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JANET LITTLE.

P.S.—If you would condescend to honour me with a few lines from your hand, I would take it as a particular favour ; and direct to me at Loudoun House, near Galston."

It is not certain whether Burns replied to the Milkmaid or not. In one of his letters to Mrs Dunlop, of the 6th September following, we find him thus acknowledging the receipt of the verses : —“ I had some time ago an epistle, part poetic and part prosaic, from your poetess, Miss J. Little—a very ingenious but modest composition. I should have written her as she requested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country ; and, I am happy to add, always to the honour of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her. I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to stain.”

It is more than probable that Burns replied in terms complimentary to the Poetess ; for not long after, Janet undertook a journey to Dumfries-shire, partly to see her relatives, but chiefly for the purpose of obtaining a personal interview with the author of the “ Mountain Daisy,” at his farm of Ellisland. Burns was away on one of his Excise excursions when Janet arrived ; but she had not been long waiting his return, when he was announced with the unpleasant intelligence that his horse had fallen, and the Poet’s arm was broken. Janet gave vent to her feelings on the occasion by recording the occurrence in the following verses :—

“ ON A VISIT TO MR BURNS.

Is’t true ? or does some magic spell
 My wond’ring eyes beguile ?
 Is this the place where deigns to dwell
 The honour of our isle ?

The charming Burns, the Muses’ care,
 Of all her sons the pride ;
 This pleasure oft I’ve sought to share,
 But been as oft denied.

Oft have my thoughts, at midnight hour,
 To him excursions made ;
 This bliss in dreams was premature,
 And with my slumbers fled.

Tis real now, no vision here
 Bequeaths a poignant dart ;
 I’ll view the poet ever dear
 Whose lays have charm’d my heart.

Hark ! now he comes, a dire alarm
 Re-echoes through his hall ;
 Pegasus* kneel'd, his rider's arm
 Was broken by a fall.

The doleful tidings to my ears
 Were in harsh notes convey'd ;
 His lovely wife stood drown'd in tears,
 While thus I pond'ring said :

' No cheering draught, with ills unmix'd,
 Can mortals taste below :
 All human fate by Heav'n is fix'd,
 Alternate joy and woe.'

With beating breast I view'd the Bard ;
 All trembling did him greet :
 With sighs bewail'd his fate so hard,
 Whose notes were ever sweet."

Flattered by the encouragement of her friends, and the local fame acquired by her stray productions, the Loudoun Milkmaid was at length induced to think of submitting her works to the public. Prospectuses were accordingly printed, and she had the gratification of finding the subscription lists speedily swelled by many of the most illustrious and respectable names, not only in the district, but throughout the country generally. Thus patronized, "The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scottish Milkmaid," appeared in 1792, from the press of John and Peter Wilson of Ayr. The volume, a thin 8vo, pp. 207, is inscribed to the Right Hon. Flora Countess of Loudoun (the present Countess Dowager,) then in her twelfth year, and under the guardianship of the Countess of Dumfries.

The casual reader might probably glance over the poems of Janet Little without discovering any thing attractive ; but there are many of the pieces not destitute of merit, while all are unexceptionable in point of morality, and bear evidence of a cultivated, well-regulated mind. In "Lines to a Lady who asked me to write a Poem" she thus humorously satirizes the poetical mania of the period :—

* The name of the Poet's horse.

“ In royal Anna’s golden days
 Hard was the task to gain the bays :
 Hard was it then the hill to climb ;
 Some broke a neck, some lost a limb.
 The vot’ries for poetic fame
 Got aff decrepit, blind, an’ lame :
 Except that little fellow Pope,
 Few ever then got near its top :
 An’ Homer’s crutches he may thank,
 Or down the brae he’d got a clank.

Swift, Thomson, Addison, an’ Young,
 Made Pindus echo to their tongue,
 In hopes to please a learned age :
 But Doctor Johnson, in a rage,
 Unto posterity did shew
 Their blunders great, their beauties few.
 But now he’s dead, we weel may ken,
 For ilka dunce maun hae a pen,
 To write in hamely, uncouth rhymes ;
 An’ yet forsooth they please the times.

A ploughman chiel, Rab Burns his name,
 Pretends to write ; an’ thinks nae shame
 To souse his sonnets on the Court ;
 An’ what is strange, they praise him for’t.
 Even folks, wha’re of the highest station,
 Ca’ him the glory of our nation.

But, what is more surprising still,
 A milkmaid must tak’ up her quill ;
 An’ she will write, shame fa’ the rabble !
 That think to please wi’ ilka bauble.
 They may thank Heav’n auld Sam’s asleep :
 For could he ance but get a pcep,
 He, wi’ a vengeance wad them sen’
 A’ headlong to the dunce’s den.

Yet Burns, I’m tauld, can write wi’ ease,
 An’ a’ denominations please ;
 Can wi’ uncommon glee impart
 A usefu’ lesson to the heart ;
 Can ilka latent thought expose,
 An’ Nature trace whare’er she goes :
 Of politics can talk wi’ skill,
 Nor dare the critics blame his quill.

But then a rustic country quean
 To write—was e’er the like o’t seen ?

A milkmaid poem-books to prent !
 Mair fit she wad her dairy tent,
 Or labour at her spinning-wheel,
 An' do her wark baith swift an' weel.
 Frae that she may some profit share,
 But winna frae her rhyming ware.
 Does she, poor silly thing, pretend
 The manners of our age to mend ?
 Mad as we are, we're wise enough
 Still to despise sic paltry stuff.

' May she wha writes, of wit get mair,
 An' a' that read an ample share
 Of candour, ev'ry fault to screen
 That in her dogg'rel scrawls are seen.'

All this and more a critic said—
 I heard, and slunk behind the shade :
 So much I dread their cruel spite,
 My hand still trembles when I write."

In an " Epistle to Nell," written immediately after her arrival at Loudoun Castle, she describes the ancient baronial residence, and the charming scenery of " Loudoun's bonnie woods and braes," if not with the poetical enthusiasm of a Tannahill, at least in a style admirably in keeping with her character and sphere of life :—

" Dear Nell, with your long silence grieved,
 Your welcome missive I received,
 And have in haste ta'en up the pen
 Some incoherent rhyme to sen' :
 As time for study is but scarce,
 Accept extemporary verse.

To Loudoun Castle well I got ;
 It is a most delightfu' spot.
 The house, tho' built before the flood,
 Remains as yet both firm and good :
 The more to decorate the place
 Our parents do the portals grace.
 There Adam stands, a comely man,
 Eve wi' the apple in her han' :
 In Eden's yard the fruit was sweet,
 But here she has not got it eat.

A garden large, and hedges high,
 O'er which no cagle scarce could fly :

Odorif'rous flowers of varied hue
 In ilka bord'ring walk we view ;
 Trees in full blossom, whose fruits excel,
 When ripe, the rose's fragrant smell :
 The plains a pleasing prospect yield,
 And plenty decks the fertile field ;
 Each beauteous arbour forms a shade,
 As if for contemplation made.
 The trees in stately rows appear,
 And ev'ry thing seems charming here :
 Did not the hungry raven's throat
 So far outvie the blackbird's note :
 Did not the ill-foreboding owl,
 At midnight, from dark caverns howl.

But Nell, in human life you know
 Our sweets are ever mix'd with woe.
 In vain for happiness we sue,
 While, as the meteor keeps in view,
 With hearts clate we grasp the prize,
 The charm is fled, the phantom dies !
 What stock soc'er the misers have,
 The heart will ever something crave ;
 Which, when possess'd, nor soothes the mind,
 But leaves an anxious blank behind.
 What tho' no bags of gold we've got ?
 We may be happy in our lot ;
 And with our little still content,
 Our all perhaps will ne'er be spent :
 And while we something have in store,
 Why should we sigh or pine for more ?"

The following petition of " Snipe, a favourite dog, to his Master," is a graphic picture :—

" O best of good masters, your mild disposition
 Perhaps may induce you to read my petition :
 Believe me in earnest, though acting the poet,
 My breast feels the smart, and mine actions do show it.

At morn when I rise, I go down to the kitchen,
 Where oft I've been treated with kicking and switchin'.
 There's nothing but quiet, no toil nor vexation,
 The cookmaid herself seems possess'd of discretion.
 The scene gave surprise, and I could not but love it,
 Then found 'twas because she had nothing to covet.
 From thence to the dining-room I took a range, sir,
 My heart swells with grief when I think of the change there :

No dishes well dress'd, with their flavour to charm me,
 Nor even so much as a fire to warm me.
 For bread I ransack ev'ry corner with caution,
 Then trip down the stair in a terrible passion.
 I go with old James, when the soss is a-dealing,
 But brutes are voracious and void of all feeling ;
 They quickly devour't—not a morsel they leave me.
 And then by their growling ill-nature they grieve me.

My friend Jenny Little pretends to respect me,
 And yet, sir, at meal-time she often neglects me :
 Of late she her breakfast with me would have parted,
 But now eats it all, so I'm quite broken-hearted.
 O haste back to Loudoun, my gentle good master,
 Relieve your poor Snipy from ev'ry disaster !
 A sight of yourself would afford me much pleasure,
 A share of your dinner an excellent treasure.

Present my best wishes unto the good lady,
 Whose plate and potatoes to me are aye ready :
 When puss and I feasted so kindly together ;
 But now quite forlorn we condole with each other.
 No more I'll insist, lest your patience be ended ;
 I beg by my scrawl, sir, you'll not be offended :
 But mind, when you see me ascending Parnassus,
 The need that's of dogs there to drive down the asses."

We might quote at still greater length, for there are several other pieces not unworthy of perusal ; but we must not exceed our limits. More fortunate, and deservedly so, than her contemporary David Sillar, Janet is understood to have cleared about fifty pounds by her publication.

The subsequent history of the "Scottish Milkmaid" furnishes few incidents for biographical detail. After the departure of Mrs Hendrie from Loudoun, she became the wife of John Richmond, an elderly man, who had long been employed about the Castle as a labourer, but still continued in the management of the dairy. She had no children herself ; but to those of her husband by a former marriage, she is said to have been particularly kind and attentive.

In figure, Janet greatly belied her name ; for she was a very tall masculine woman, with dark hair, and features somewhat coarse. A person who knew her intimately, remarks that "she was no bad representation of some of Sir Walter Scott's gigantic

heroines, but without their impudence." On the contrary, she was remarkable for modesty of demeanour, and entirely free from the egotism of authorship. Though she delighted to embody her thoughts, or record any local or passing event in verse, she hardly ever alluded to her productions, even in the company of those with whom she was most intimate. She was greatly beloved in the neighbourhood, and enjoyed a high character for piety and rectitude of conduct. She was a member of the Dissenting congregation in Galston, then and still under the pastorship of the Rev. Mr Blackwood, by whom she was regarded as one of the most sincerely pious and intelligent members of his church. Possessing an excellent judgment, she could appreciate something more than mere declamation in a preacher. The Rev. Mr Schaw of Ayr, assisting Mr Blackwood one Sabbath, called on Janet the following day; and, in the course of a lively conversation, allusion having been made to the sermon he had delivered, the reverend gentleman was curious to learn her opinion as to its merits. "Indeed," said Janet, "I thocht it rather flowery. Ye ken what I mean, Mr Schaw—a wi' hue mair soun' than sense!" Mr Schaw, who is well known for his facetious, jocular disposition, good-naturedly observed, on taking leave, that "*they* would have to beware what kind of sermons they preached, since they had such critics as Janet Little." A remarkable instance of her tenacity of memory is told by Mr Blackwood, who recollects having preached in his own meeting-house, on a particular occasion, without varying in almost a single word from the written sermon, and some weeks afterwards of delivering the same discourse at Kilmarnock, where he omitted a sentence of about two lines of his manuscript. Next time he met Janet, who was present on both occasions, she pointed out the passage withheld!

In 1807, when John Hamilton, Esq., was appointed factor to the Countess of Loudoun, Janet was still employed in her former capacity, and became so intimate in the house of that gentleman as to be almost regarded as one of the domestics. One of the latest efforts of her muse, it is said, was a poem on the birth of twin sons at the accouchement of Mrs Hamilton. Janet died in Causey Head, at Loudoun Castle, after twenty-four hours' illness.

occasioned by what is commonly termed a cramp in the stomach, on the 15th of March 1813. She was interred in the sequestered burying-ground of Loudoun-Kirk, the burial-place of the Loudoun family, and where rest the remains of the martyred Fleming, who was shot at Drumclog. A plain stone, on which is engraved the following words, marks the spot of her interment:—"In memory of John Richmond, who died August 10, 1819, aged 78 years; and Janet Little, his spouse, who died March 15, 1813, aged 54 years."

Janet left behind her a variety of manuscript pieces, some entire, and others apparently only half-finished. They are chiefly of a pious cast; and bear testimony to the sincerity of her religious professions. As some of our readers may be curious, we select the following from the MSS. with which we have been favoured; and we are not sure but their own intrinsic merit entitles them to preservation:—

“ TO A BLACKBIRD.

December 24.

O sweetest minstrel of the grove—
 Who now with chattering wing,
 Forsaken hast the leafless bower
 Where thou wast wont to sing—

Why now so much does anguish keen
 Thy little bosom swell?
 Are there no stores for winter stern
 Hid in thy narrow cell?

No charming geens,* no cherries fair,
 Thy food in seasons past?
 The haws are gone, all nature sinks
 Beneath the howling blast!

Pale hunger marks thy languid eye,
 Low bends thy cheerless crest;
 Thy frequent visits loud proclaim
 The sorrows of thy breast.

Can man withhold the pittance small
 Thy craving looks demand?
 Yea, snares to catch thy tentless steps
 Are planted by his hand!

* Geens—a species of wild cherry.

Accept the sympathetic tear
 Due to thy state forlorn,
 Which swells for thousands of our race
 Whom haughty tyrants scorn.

Too many with uncautious step
 Sport on the flow'ry spray,
 Till the rude hand of age or want
 Pluck all their joys away.

Nor friend nor foe their wants relieve,
 Their sighs are spent in vain ;
 The hapless victims of despair,
 Bound by misfortune's chain.

Let prudence, then, our footsteps guide,
 While odours scent the gale ;
 Nor may we lean on broken reeds,
 When adverse winds assail.

May He who decks the vernal plain.
 And stills the tempest's roar,
 Direct our views to yonder clime
 Where storms harass no more."

Who the subject of the following was, we have not been informed. Both the sentiment and the poetry please us very much :—

“ ELEGY ON T. S.

In these lone mansions of the silent dead
 Lorenzo lies, his life and labours o'er ;
 Below this turf reclines his hoary head,
 Till the last trump resound from shore to shore.

Long did he bend beneath a load of years,
 With cheerless steps pursue the dreary way ;
 An ancient tenant in the vale of tears,
 Yet fond to hold the tenement of clay.

Can sages say what fascinating charm
 Binds our attachment to this noxious soil ;
 Where poisonous gales are fraught with rude alarm,
 And disappointment mocks our anxious toil.

No more with wakeful eye he'll mark the dawn,
 Nor bounding lark salute his listening ear ;
 Loudoun ! no more he'll trace thy flowery lawn,
 Nor bordering walks by artful *cutler* cheer.

The rueful peasant 'mid the haunts of woe,
In silence sunk, and by the world forgot ;
Not so ignoble as elude the blow—
He marks his victim in the lonely cot.

Nor can the glare of grandeur, power of wealth,
The pride of titles, or the boast of art,
Bribe for a moment the return of health,
Or wrest an arrow from the aching heart.

The good must fall, but let them not repine,
They'll rise on virtue's radiant charms complete,
Beyond the grave, where kindred spirits join,
They'll bask in beams of pleasure pure and sweet."

Janet is said to have carried on a correspondence with a Jean Murray, another rustic Poetess, who resided at a place near Mauchline, called the Muir. This appears to have been subsequent to the publication of her poems, as none of their epistles appear in the volume. Jean Murray was a person of little note. It is remembered about Loudoun, that, a short time previous to her death, Janet was visited by the daughter of Burns, the "image" of his "bonnie Betty."

GAVIN TURNBULL,

POET AND COMEDIAN.

FEW particulars are known of the life of GAVIN TURNBULL. Though perhaps the most talented of all the Ayrshire Contemporaries of Burns, and an intimate friend of the Poet, both his name and his works are equally forgotten. This is a fate certainly undeserved; and we feel a corresponding degree of gratification in attempting to rescue his memory from oblivion. He was born, it is probable, in Kilmarnock: at all events, he received his education there; and there he first committed the sin of poesy—

“ First, Irvine, on thy banks I strung
The lyre, and love’s soft passion sung.”

His father, Thomas Turnbull, or “Tammy Trumble,” as the old man was more commonly designated, was a dyer in one of the factories of that town. Tammy, who originally came, it is supposed, from Hawick, was rather an eccentric in his way, and was well known in Killie. He was small in stature, of an odd-looking figure, and a regular frequenter of the tipping-houses for which Kilmarnock was somewhat celebrated in those halcyon days of “caup-yill” and “pap-in.” Tammy was besides a man of musical *ingine*; fond of singing songs, not always of the most delicate character; and what no doubt tended to the future irregularities of his son, it is said that he frequently repaired to the “yill-house” with young Gavin, where, “bousing at the nappy,” they would remain till one or both were in the altitudes of inebriety.

Under such tuition the delirium of poesy was more likely to be cultivated than the more useful lessons of every-day life; and so it unfortunately happened in the case of poor Turnbull. He was brought up to a laborious avocation in the manufactory of Gregory & Thomson; but it was soon observed that he was more

fond of spouting from Shakspeare, and of weaving his thoughts into verse, than of weaving carpets. From his habits, it may be presumed that Gavin became an early victim to a malady, not uncommon to the followers of the Nine, *an empty purse*. This was a disease which daily gained upon him; insomuch, that latterly he was under the necessity of betaking himself to a small attic in Soulis Street,* (Kilmarnock); and, if we are not misinformed, his house, if genius is to be estimated by the amount of deprivation endured, was such as bore the most ample evidence of the enthusiasm with which he worshipped at the shrine of Apollo. We shall not trust ourselves with a description of our "Poet's corner." "He resided alone in a small garret," says our informant, "in which there was no furniture. The bed on which he lay was entirely composed of straw, with the exception of an old patched covering, which he threw over him during the night. He had no chair to sit upon. A cold stone placed by the fire served him as such; and the sole of a small window at one end of the room was all he had for a table, from which to take his food, or on which to write his verses. A tin kettle and a spoon were all his cooking utensils; and when he prepared a meal for himself, he used the lid of the kettle instead of a bowl! Perhaps no poet," adds our informant, "either major or minor, ancient or modern, ever existed in so wretched a condition as this. The poverty of Burns, of which there has been so much talk in the world, was opulence compared to it!"

And yet, in this miserable abode, how many bright visions of future fame and greatness may have been indulged in by the Poet! If peradventure his soaring imagination led him to despise the "creature comforts," the luxuries and enjoyments of life, as the objects alone of grovelling mortality, we may conjecture with what contemptuous complacency the aerial imagination of the Bard looked down from his bare and sky-lit temple, upon the well-housed, well-fed, plodding son of industry. In this way, and still within the scope of probability, we might give fancy the

* This street derives its name from a stone pillar, eight or nine feet high, (called Soulis' Cross), erected here on the spot where, it is said, Lord Soulis, an English nobleman, was killed by an arrow from one of the Boyd family in the year 1444.

rein in endless surmising. Certain it is, that in this garret, steeped as he was to the very teeth in adversity, Turnbull had the philosophy to compose a great portion of his early poetry; and it is astonishing with what vivacity of spirit he writes the following ode to David Sillar, then in circumstances not much more affluent than his own:—

“ By this ye’ll figure to yoursel’,
 Dear lad, the method how I dwell,
 And pass the lonely time:
 In a wee housie, warm and snug,
 I sit beside the chimla lug,
 And spin awa’ my rhyme.
 Sometimes the weary ploy I curse,
 That fortune to my share
 Has thrown, which ever hauds my purse
 Sae toom, and back sae bare:
 Then grumblin and rumblin
 I throw awa’ my pen
 For ever mair, never
 To write for tasteless men.

The greatest dults that ever wrote,
 Have often noble patrons got,
 Their nonsense to protect;
 Whilst chiefl of maist ingine and skill
 Unnoticed, unrewarded still,
 Meet nought but cauld neglect.
 O Pæan’s* son! how I repine
 At your unhappy lot;
 While empty naethings glare and shine.
 Your mem’ries are forgot.
 Yet time will sublime still
 A’ true poetic lays;
 And glorious, victorious,
 Bestow the weel-earn’d bays.

Then heed na, Davie, though we be
 A race exposed to misery,
 A’ mankind hae their shair;
 Yet wi’ the few whase hearts are fired
 Wi’ love o’ sang, by Him inspired,
 What mortals can compare:
 How sweet, when in the feeling heart,
 Alternate passions glow,

* Apollo.

The mixed ideas to impart,
 To paint our joy and woe :
 Desire doth conspire
 Wi' love to form the sang,
 While pleasing and easing
 The numbers glide along.

The sweets o' nature a' are ours,
 The verdant fields, the blooming flowers,
 The woodland and the plain :
 To us the bonny months of spring
 Delights and soft sensations bring,
 The vulgar ne'er attain.
 How sweet, when night is calm and still,
 Beneath pale Phœbe's ray,
 Along the margin of a rill,
 To wind our lonely way :
 Still musing, and choosing,
 Ideas fit to move
 Some charmer, and warm her
 With all the flames of love."

This, both in versification and sentiment, is an imitation of Burns' "First Epistle to Davie," and we should think not greatly inferior in merit. It is curious, as illustrative of that reckless and spurious independence of spirit which could contemplate with indifference the approach of old age and poverty, with their attendant evils, and still exclaim with Burns—

"The last o't—the warst o't—
 Is only but to beg."

"Warm and snug," applied to a garret-room, without a bed, without a table, without a chair, or indeed any of the conveniences of life, is a proof how easy it is for poesy to invest even the most repulsive locality with charms. Though with only a stone for his seat, Turnbull could say—

"In a wee housie, warm and snug,
 I sit beside the chimla lug
 And spin awa' my rhyme."

But we shall not longer dwell on the gloomy side of the picture. Much of poor Turnbull's irregularity and consequent indigence may be attributed to the adverse circumstances of his early life, familiarized as he was to habits of intemperance, which he ought

to have been taught to avoid. The drudgery of the loom, too, was ill-suited to one of his temperament and acquirements; for, however limited his academical studies may have been, it is evident he possessed a cultivated mind; and his writings display not only accuracy in composition, but a pretty extensive acquaintance with both ancient and modern literature. After all, the social indulgences with which he is charged ought probably to be attributed less to a fondness for the pleasures of the bowl, than to the circumscribed sphere of life in which he was placed, and the morbid consciousness of ability to perform a more conspicuous part in the drama of life. Little as there is known of his later history, it is sufficient to warrant the belief that his intemperance was not inveterate; and that, amidst his early prodigality, he must have devoted no inconsiderable portion of time to the acquisition of knowledge. Considering his humble origin, the want of access to books, and the little leisure he could devote to their perusal in his boyish days, his literary attainments were such as to reflect the highest degree of credit.

At what period Turnbull left Kilmarnock is uncertain; but it is known that both he and the rest of his father's family went from thence to Glasgow. What mode of life he followed there, we have not been informed. All we know is, that his poetical works were published in that city in 1788, by David Niven, printer, under the title of "Poetical Essays, by Gavin Turnbull." Prefaces are not always to be relied on for accuracy of statement; but, if Turnbull is to be believed, it appears that his circumstances and prospects were at some period or other much higher than our reminiscences give him credit for. He says—"The author of the following Essays, deprived early in life, by unforeseen misfortunes, of the means of pursuing that liberal plan of education he once had a prospect of, has not the vanity to imagine they have either that degree of novelty of invention, or correctness of versification, which will stand the test of rigid criticism;" * * * and he farther adds, that "some unfavourable circumstances in his situation, by hastening the publication, has prevented them from receiving that degree of correction they would otherwise have obtained." What was the nature of these

“ unfavourable circumstances,” we are not aware. Turnbull’s volume consists of two hundred and twenty-four pages, and is divided into five departments—*Elegies, Pastorals, Odes, Poetical Essays in the Scottish Dialect, and Songs*. He appears to have been an admirer of the manner of Shenstone, whose works were at the time highly popular. The verses entitled “ Myra,” are a pretty fair specimen of his success in approaching the style of that author :—

“ The forests are mantled in green,
The hawthorn in blossom looks gay,
The primrose and daisy are seen,
And birds carol sweet on the spray.

’Tis now the gay season of love,
Soft raptures inspire every heart ;
Come, Myra, retire to the grove,
While I my fond passion impart.

You say, that you doubt if I love ;
From whence can such fancies arise ?
If words are too languid to prove,
’Tis seen in the glance of mine eyes.
Believe me, thou charmer divine,
Those valleys can witness my pain ;
The streams join their murmurs with mine,
And the echoes have learn’d to complain.

I’m young and too simple to lie,
To call thee a goddess or queen ;
My flame is reveal’d in that sigh,
My blushes explain what I mean.
My passion’s so mild and sincere,
And chaste as the innocent dove ;
I call thee not false nor severe,
’Tis sure the completest of love.

I walk by the whispering grove,
Where the zephyrs sound soft thro’ the spray ;
I mourn with the amorous dove,
And join the sweet nightingale’s lay.
Those sounds are so mournfully sweet,
That mirth seems unpleasant to me ;
I’d leave the fond thought with regret
Of indulging a passion for thee.

I lie by the verge of the stream,
Whose murmurs oft lull me to rest ;

I court the kind flattering dream,
 To lay me supine on thy breast ;
 I wake, and I fold thee in vain,
 The shade is too subtle to keep ;
 I foolishly dote on my pain,
 And find it a pleasure to weep.

The pleasures that wait on the spring,
 The flowers, and the fair-budding tree,
 The joys that the summer can bring,
 Are tasteless when absent from thee :
 The warblers that sing from the grove,
 In vain do their melody flow ;
 But when with the maid that I love,
 'Tis enchantment wherever I go.

I covet not jewels and gold ;
 The rich I unenvied can see ;
 No treasure on earth I behold,
 No jewel so precious as thee :
 With me to my cottage retire,
 Unburthen'd with treasure and wealth ;
 Let love all our pleasures inspire,
 And live in contentment and health."

Among the pieces of greater length in the volume, is one entitled "The Bard," and "inscribed to Mr R[obert] B[urns]." It is in the Spenserian stanza, and, with due allowance for an affected antiquity in the use of obsolete words, which mar the smoothness of the versification to a modern ear, the poem displays considerable merit. It is, as a whole, too long for our pages ; but we willingly quote a few stanzas :—

" O thou, whom from the pleasant banks of Ayr
 Thy merit summon'd to Edina's walls ;
 Whose songs delight her sons and daughters fair,
 And loudly echo through their splendid halls.
 On thee a simple Poet humbly calls—
 A simple Poet, who, obscured the while,
 The fear of scornful critic sore appals ;
 On whom, if Coila's Bard vouchsafe to smile,
 His name shall spread abroad thro' Albion's sea-girt isle.

There whilom ligd, ypent in garret high,
 A tuneful Bard, who well could touch the lyre,
 Who often sung so soot and witchingly,
 As made the crowds, in silent gaze, admire :

Ymolten with the wild seraphic fire
 Which his sweet sonnets eathly could impart,
 They list'ning stood, ne never did they tire,
 So steal'd his soft persuasion on the heart,
 So smooth his numbers flow'd, all unrestrain'd by art.

Sometimes, as fancy prompt him, he would sing
 The charms of nature at the morning's dawn,
 Or paint the beauties of the blooming spring,
 The shady forest, and the flow'ry lawn,
 The whiten'd thorn and roses newly blawn,
 Or mazy rills, that wildly devious flow,
 Or pensive shepherd, from the crowd withdrawn,
 Sore pined with luckless love and mochel wo,
 Design'd from tow'ring cliff his wretched self to throw."

Changing the subject to Winter "shrouded in her mantle hoar,"
 he exclaims—

" Now shut the pond'rous gate, and rouse the fire,
 Produce the flask, and fill the massy bowl ;
 To gloomy haunt let wrinkled care retire,
 Let joy abound possessing ev'ry soul,
 Let Boreas bluster, and the tempest howl :
 'Tis ours to snatch the pleasures as they fly,
 Now up the lofty Diapason rowl,
 'Tis music gives the purest extacy,
 And lifts the soul from earth exalted to the sky.

See where the miser, brooding o'er his gear,
 Sits sad and sullen, in his dreary cell ;
 No glowing fire, the sable walls to cheer,
 With him pale want and timid fancy dwell.
 O ! tell us true, ye wretched miscreants tell,
 Why all this caution to secure your gold ?
 Will it appease the ruthless King of Hell,
 Or help to make the burning climate cold ?
 Ah ! vain your hope, for there no joy is bought or sold.

Let the dull cynic preach his musty rules,
 No son of Bacchus will attend his lore :
 Let him hold forth to children and to fools,
 And turn, and turn, his lifeless lectures o'er,
 And cite old Plato and ilk sage of yore,
 And beat his breast, and grin and look awry,
 Down with the pedant, let us sing and roar :
 Behold the festive moments dancing by,
 'Tis ours in joy to live, and catch them as they fly."

These extracts, if not marked by much originality of thought, display considerable force and fluency of expression. "IRVINE WATER" is another piece of some length, and not destitute of merit. We give it a place chiefly on account of its description of local scenery :—

“ Roused at the prospect of the blooming spring,
Again my youthful Muse attempts to sing :
Of woods and plains, the beauties to rehearse,
Or make some fav’rite stream adorn my verse.

Hail, Irvine, thou whose flow’ry banks so gay,
And vocal groves first heard my rural lay ;
Fain would the muse this early tribute bring,
And try the beauties of thy course to sing :
Ye Naiades pour your liquid stores along,
And sweetly murmur to the rural song.

In vain we search for Simois’ silver source,
Where Ilium’s ruins choke its winding course.
No more Scammander rages o’er the plains,
Yet rolls his waves in Homer’s matchless strains.
O, did my Muse, with equal ardour glow,
As long thy waves should in my numbers flow !

Now dawns the day, the dusky shadows fly,
The sun in glory mounts the azure sky,
The distant landscape opens to the view,
The misty mountains, wet with early dew,
Round pearly drops hang pendant on the spray,
The flow’rs expand their foliage to the day ;
On ev’ry verdant bush and blooming thorn,
The plummy warblers hail the rosy morn.

What joy to wander undisturb’d with care,
To breath the fragrance of the morning air,
Where Irvine’s streams glide gently through the dale,
And gather health from ev’ry rising gale ;
To stray the woods and dewy lawns among,
Led by the Muse to meditate the song :
Or curious, wand’ring to an airy height,
Indulge my fancy with the varied sight ?

From where yon mountain’s tufted tops arise,
To where the sun rolls down the westren skies ;
Where, ’midst a spacious frith, black Arran shrouds
Its rocky top, among surrounding clouds ;
A noble prospect, stretch’d before the eye,
May with Hesperia or Arcadia vie.

Here winding dales and lengthen'd plains extend,
 There, from the vales, the cloud-capt hills ascend :
 Here waving forests, mantled all in green,
 With fertile fields and flow'ry lawns between ;
 There winding streams the verdant meads adorn,
 And, dimpling smooth, reflect the rays of morn.
 Along the margin rural seats appear,
 And gardens blooming with the vernal year.

What though the wond'ring trav'ler still admires
 Italia's lofty domes and lengthen'd spires,
 Her gilded prospects, stretch'd in bright array,
 Poetic scenes with flow'rs and verdure gay ;
 Or let Arabia boast her spicy fields,
 More precious blessings Caledonia yields ;
 Though less exuberant our northren soil,
 Yet peace and plenty crown the lab'rer's toil :
 Here all that's charming, all that's sweet is found,
 And Liberty makes nature smile around.

Where first the stream his sacred source forsakes,
 And through the wilds his mazy winding takes ;
 Where water from the pendant rock distils,
 And foster'd by the gently purling rills,
 Where circling ivy mantling bow'rs display,
 The lonely owl forsakes the cheerful day.
 Here, like some ruffian from the world exiled,
 The rav'nous hawk reigns tyrant of the wild ;
 The lonely shepherd, on the banks reclin'd,
 Nurses fantastic notions in his mind.
 The turtle wails upon the aged trees,
 The water sounding to the whisp'ring breeze ;
 Repeating caves resound the water's fall,
 And melancholy murmurs answer all.

As by degrees the Naiades swell the tide,
 Th' expanding landscape opens fair and wide ;
 There stately towns and villages arise,
 And lofty piles, whose turrets reach the skies.
 Here many an antient tow'r and fortress stands,
 The sad memorials of contending lands,
 When kindred nations fiercely strove in arms,
 And fill'd the hostile land with dire alarms :
 Then heap'd with slaughter ev'ry field appear'd,
 And war through all the land his horrid aspect rear'd.

Where heaps of carnage strew'd the ensanguined plain,
 The skilful farmer rears the yellow grain :

The lazy shepherd lies upon the ground,
 Amid th' extended trench and verdant mound,
 While rough industry plies his useful hand,
 And fills with plenty all the peaceful land.

Along the level holms, with verdure gay,
 The patient angler slowly bends his way,
 With taper rod and well-dissembled hook,
 To tempt the thoughtless tenants of the brook.

Where in the dimpling pool the shepherd spies,
 Th' inverted landscape and the liquid skies,
 The youths with naked arms the waves divide,
 And smoothly cleave, along the yielding tide.
 But let each forward heedless youth beware,
 Nor the sad fate of young Menalcas share,
 Who, urged by fervent heat, his limbs to cool,
 Impatient plunged amid the sullen pool :
 Eager he strives, his efforts all are vain,
 Him fate denies the distant shore to gain ;
 The whirling eddies curl above his head,
 The lovely youth is number'd with the dead.
 Much was the grief his frantic mother bore,
 His aged father much, his sweetheart more ;
 Whom love with chains of strong affection bound,
 And soon the nuptial tie their bliss had crown'd ;
 But fates malignant 'gainst their joy conspired,
 And, all at once, their pleasing hopes retired.

Now wouldst thou sing what noble seats appear,
 What ancient heroes form'd their dwellings here !
 The tow'rs of London* first salute the eye
 With lofty walls, and turrets rear'd on high ;
 Gay to the view, upon a rising ground,
 With pendant woods and shady bow'rs around.

All hail, ye solemn thought-inspiring groves !
 Where rapt entranced, sweet contemplation roves,
 Where charming fancy leads her airy train,
 Who touch the Muses' lyre, or breathe th' enamour'd strain !
 For there the lover, led by Cynthia's ray,
 Along the river's margin winds his way ;
 Or pensive, seated 'neath the spreading boughs,
 Breathes, to the lonely woods, his am'rous vows ;

* Seat of the Dowager-Marchioness of Hastings, daughter of James-Mure Campbell, fifth Earl of Loudoun, who died in 1786.

While fairies form their nightly cavalcades,
 And hold gay revels in the moonlight shades,
 Aerial minstrels swell the soothing strain,
 And heav'nly airs enchant the list'ning swain.

See where the Dean* her ruin'd fabric rears,
 A mournful scene her naked wall appears ;
 The clasping ivy shades her tott'ring tow'rs,
 Where night-owls form their melancholy bow'rs.
 Prone from the top, huge ruin'd fragments fall,
 The howling wind sounds dreary in the hall.
 No more the voice of mirth is heard to sound,
 But melancholy silence reigns around.

Where late an antiquated pile appear'd
 In days of yore, by Gothic artists rear'd
 Upon the margin of the rolling tide,
 Stands Caprington,† of Coila's tow'rs the pride,
 Which with superior majesty appears
 The tedious labour of revolving years ;
 Its ample walls bespeak its master's mind
 Industry's friend, benevolent and kind.

What verse, O Fairly,‡ can thy halls depaint !
 And stately portico of vast extent,
 Design'd with taste, and execute with cost,
 Nor can the neighb'ring seats such beauty boast.

High on a mound Dundonald's ruin stands,§
 And of the frith a prospect wide commands,

* Dean Castle, formerly the residence of the Boyd family, is situated about half a mile north-east of Kilmarnock, at the junction of two small streams which form Kilmarnock Water. The last of the earls who resided here was beheaded in London, along with Lord Balmerino, in August 1746, for his exertions in the cause of Prince Charles Stuart. "Kilmarnock," says Smollett, "was a nobleman of fine personal accomplishments; he had been educated in Revolution principles, and engaged in the Rebellion, partly from the desperate situation of his fortune, and partly from resentment to the Government, on his being deprived of a pension which he had for some time enjoyed." The present Earl of Errol is his direct descendent in the male line; and, but for the attainder, would be Earl of Kilmarnock. He is by an English peerage Lord Kilmarnock.

† The seat of John Smith Cuninghame, Esq. John Smith, Esq. W.S. married the heiress of Caprington, and took the surname of Cuninghame of Caprington.

‡ The residence of Sir John Cuninghame Fairlie, Bart.

§ The ancient residence of the Cochrans of Dundonald. The old tower and the mound on which it stands, is all that now remains of the property in the hands of the family.

Where Arran rears aloft its sable brow,
 And frowns terrific on the waves below,
 Ailsey's round sterile rock the prospect ends,
 Whose airy peak among the clouds ascends,
 Fair Irvine, on the sandy margin placed,
 Appears with lofty spires and turrets graced ;
 The swelling surges beat against the shore,
 And 'mongst the rocky isles tempestuous roar ;
 The stately vessels, on the foaming tide,
 Loaded with wealth, along the billows ride ;
 I see the crowded masts and swelling sails,
 The waving streamers flying in the gales,
 And gaze with wonder on the splendid show
 Of lofty towns and busy crowds below.

Hold, hold, my Muse ! at once suspend thy flight,
 And look enamour'd from this airy height,
 Where stands secure, upon the river's side,
 A rural dwelling destitute of pride ;
 No costly ornaments the structure grace,
 But simple nature beautifies the place :
 Here Ruricola dwells, of swains the best,
 Of feelings and a gen'rous mind possess'd ;
 Improved by science, from pedantry free,
 Skill'd in the rules of deep philosophy :
 Of plants the aromatic virtue knows,
 And on his garden every care bestows ;
 There trims his flow'rs, or prunes the encumber'd trees,
 Or forms a proper station for his bees ;
 Curious their balmy labours to survey,
 Delightful task to pass the shining hours away.

O, gentle swain ! how happy could I spend
 This fleeting life with such a gen'rous friend !
 Well pleased, my tuneful labours to pursue,
 Improved by charming solitude and you.

That man how bless'd, who prudently retires,
 Nor to be great and arrogant aspires ;
 Content alone with what his fortune gives,
 To strife unknown, he independent lives.
 What though no cringing flatt'ers at his gate
 Stand trembling, and at awful distance wait ;
 Though no obsequious minions call him Lord,
 Nor eates luxurious heap his humble board,
 Nor costly ornaments his dwelling hold,
 Nor chests encumber'd with imprison'd gold—

Yet his the life from expectation free,
 Corroding care and vain anxiety :
 Peace stands a sentinel to guard his door,
 And keep at distance each malignant pow'r ;
 Time flies for him, on softest silken wings,
 And each revolving day contentment brings :
 With joy he breathes the balmy gales of morn.
 And sees the night a welcome guest return :
 'Tis his to wander o'er the fertile fields,
 And taste what nature uncorrupted yields ;
 Her laws to study and her works explore,
 And on the wings of contemplation soar :
 Throughout the whole, to trace the gradual line
 Which leads progressive to the source divine,
 To teach the soul above the earth t' ascend,
 To weigh his dust and meditate his end.

Let others toil assiduously for fame,
 Contend for honour, and a deathless name :
 All vain applause, and honour I'd resign ;
 Give me a friend, and such a life be mine.

Thus, when the summer's joys could scarce delight,
 Or grove or stream my weary steps invite ;
 I tried the Muse, beneath the shade reclin'd,
 To ease a pensive melancholy mind,
 To sooth my fancy with the scenes that please,
 Rural contentment, and poetic ease."

As a specimen of the author's composition in the " Scottish dialect," we give the following :—

“ SALE OF STATIONERY WARE AT BUCHANAN'S HEAD,

K * * * * * CK.

' To a' the warl be it kend,
 That I by auction do intend
 Great routh o' goods and gear to vend,
 At lowest price :
 Sae, pray, good people, all attend
 If ye be wise.

Imp'v'mis, then, I can content ye,
 Wi' learned books and Bibles plenty,
 Gilt on the backs, and bound right dainty,
 In good *calf-sheep* :
 Glow'r at them weel, and Ise indent ye
 Shall buy them cheap.

The rev'rend brethren o' the band
May hae whatever they demand,
And, they wha like, I winna stand,
 To sell or niffer ;
Bring goods or siller i' ye're hand,
 We winna differ.

The wit and scholar here may find,
A' that can please a learned mind ;
As Robin Hood, and Captain Hind,
 And other sparks :
But, what leaves a' the rest behind,
 My father's warks.*

The Book of Knowledge, that can tell
A' things in heav'n, in earth, and hell,
Wi' *locus poeus*, magic spell,
 For greedy rooks ;
To ragged chapmen, too, I sell
 Cheap question books.

I've wax and wafers, ink, and quills,
An' best o' paper frae the mills,
For bundles, — or bills
 For book or letter,
There's nae sae good—cheap, cheap it sells
 For ready catter.

But what's of a' the rarest show,
My pictures, ranged in seemly row :
Here twelve good rules, which we should know ;
 There Captain Bluff ;
Here Peeping Tom, and down below
 Stands Jamie Duff.†

* Hymns and Spiritual Songs.

† Jamie, or Bailie Duff, was a well-known character in Edinburgh. The Print alluded to must have been one of the early productions of John Kay, the caricaturist, whose works we lately published, in two vols. 4to, accompanied with biographical descriptions. From this work we quote the following sketch of Bailie Duff:—

“ Jamie Duff, the third figure in the print, was long conspicuous upon the streets of Edinburgh as a person of weak intellects, and of many grotesque peculiarities. He was the child of a poor widow who dwelt in the Cowgate, and was chiefly indebted for subsistence to the charity of those who were amused by his odd but harmless manners. This poor creature had a passion for attending funerals ; and no solemnity of that kind could take place in the city without being graced by his presence. He usually took his place in front of the *saulies* or ushers, or, if they were wanting, at the head of the ordinary company ; thus forming a kind of practical burlesque upon the whole ceremony,

I've china-ware, baith gilt and plain,
 Of which the ladies are right fain ;
 And to drink punch, or yet champaign.
 Weel polish'd glasses ;
 And something else, I'll no explain,
 For bonnie lasses.

the toleration of which it is now difficult to account for. To Jamie himself, it must be allowed, it was as serious a matter as to any of the parties more immediately concerned. He was most scrupulous both as to costume and countenance, never appearing without crape, cravat, and weepers, and a look of downcast woe in the highest degree edifying. It is true the weepers were but of paper, and the cravat, as well as the general attire, in no very fair condition. He had all the merit, nevertheless, of good intention, which he displayed more particularly on the occurrence of funerals of unusual dignity, by going previously to a most respectable hatter, and getting his hat newly tintured with the dye of sorrow, and the crape arranged so as to hang a little lower down his back.

“ By keeping a sharp look-out after prospective funerals, Jamie succeeded in securing nearly all the enjoyment which the mortality of the city was capable of affording. It nevertheless chanced that one of some consequence escaped his vigilance. He was standing at the well drawing water, when, lo ! a funeral procession, and a very stately one, appeared. What was to be done ? He was wholly unprepared : he had neither crape nor weepers, and there was now no time to assume them ; and moreover, and worse than all this, he was encumbered with a pair of “ *stoups* ! ” It was a trying case ; but Jamie's enthusiasm in the good cause overcame all difficulties. He stepped out, took his usual place in advance of the company, stoups and all, and, with one of these graceful appendages in each hand, moved on as chief usher of the procession. The funeral party did not proceed in the direction of any of the usual places of interment. It took quite a contrary direction. It left the town : this was odd ! It held on its way : odder still ! Mile after mile passed away, and still there was no appearance of a consummation. On and on the procession went, but Jamie, however surprised he might be at the unusual circumstance, manfully kept his post, and with indefatigable perseverance continued to lead on. In short, the procession never halted till it reached the seaside at Queensferry, a distance of about nine miles, where the party composing it embarked, coffin and all, leaving the poor fool on the shore, gazing after them with a most ludicrous stare of disappointment and amazement. Such a thing had never occurred to him before in the whole course of his experience.

“ Jamie's attendance at funerals, however, though unquestionably proceeding from a pure and disinterested passion for such ceremonies, was also a source of considerable emolument to him, as his spontaneous services were as regularly paid for as those of the hired officials ; a *douceur* of a shilling, or half-a-crown, being generally given on such occasions.

“ We come now to view the subject of our memoir as a civic dignitary—as Bailie Duff—a title which was given him by his contemporaries, and which posterity has recognised. The history of his elevation is short and simple. Jamie was smitten with the ambition of becoming a magistrate ; and at once, to realize his own notions on the subject, and to establish his claims to the envied dignity in the eyes of others, he pro-

I've heucks to shear the harvest corn ;
 Good cudgels, made of varnish'd thorn ;
 Rare spluchans, ance by sea-dogs worn,
 And wylie foxes ;
 Braw sneeshing-mills, o' brass and horn ;
 And barber's boxes.

I hae pomatum for the hair ;
 Good plated buckles, round and square :
 I hae black-ball, the choicest ware
 E'er gaed on leather :
 I've hoops and rings, and ribbons rare,
 And a' thegither.

The chiel that's hardly worth a groat,
 May be provided wi' a coat
 At second hand, and no ae jot
 The waur o' wear ;
 Auld breeks and waisteoats may be got.
 And bonnets here.

enred and wore a brass medal and chain, in imitation of the gold insignia worn by the city magistrates, and completed his equipment by mounting a wig and cocked hat. Jamie now became a veritable bailie ; and his claims to the high honour—it gives us pleasure to record the fact—were cheerfully acknowledged.

“ At one period of the Bailie's magisterial career, however, his pretensions certainly were disputed by one individual ; and by whom does the reader imagine ? Why, by a genuine dignitary of corresponding rank—a member of the Town-Council ! This person was dreadfully shocked at this profanation of things sacred, and he ordered his brother magistrate, Duff, to be deprived of his insignia, which was accordingly done. City politics running high at this time, this odd, and it may be added absurd, exercise of power, was unmercifully satirized by the local poets and painters of the day.

“ It may not be without interest to know that this poor innocent manifested much filial affection. To his mother he was ever kind and attentive, and so anxious for her comfort, that he would consume none of the edibles he collected, till he had carried them home, and allowed her an opportunity of partaking of them. So rigid was he in his adherence to this laudable rule, that he made no distinction between solids and fluids, but insisted on having all deposited in his pocket.

“ The Bailie, at one period, conceived a great aversion to silver money, from a fear of being enlisted ; and in order to make sure of escaping this danger, having no thirst whatever for military glory, he steadily refused all silver coin ; when his mother, discovering that his excessive caution in this matter had a serious effect on their casual income, got his nephew, a boy, to accompany him in the character of receiver-general and purse-bearer ; and by the institution of this officer, the difficulty was got over, and the Bailie relieved from all apprehension of enlistment.

“ He was tall and robust, with a shrinking, shambling gait, and usually wore his stockings hanging loose about his heels.—He never could speak distinctly, though it was remarked that, when irritated, he could make a shift to swear. He died in 1788.”

a certain degree of truth in these remarks. The world, however, has confirmed, by even a more intense degree of admiration, the "rage" which became fashionable on the first appearance of Burns on the "literary stage." Campbell was intimately acquainted with the Ayrshire Bard, during the short residence of the latter in Edinburgh; but he was himself a Poet—an unsuccessful one—and may thus have endeavoured to console himself for the want of that peculiar felicity which ushered in the extraordinary genius of Burns.

Of the subsequent history of Turnbull we are almost entirely ignorant. Having early imbibed a predilection for the drama, he appears soon after the publication of his volume to have embraced the stage as a profession; and a few years subsequently we find him in Dumfries, in the character of comedian. Whether he was acquainted with Burns prior to this or not is doubtful, though, from certain expressions of the Poet in one of his letters to Thomson, it might be inferred that the intimacy was of old standing. This as it may, during his residence in Dumfries, Turnbull was on terms of intimate friendship with Burns; and it need not be doubted that they had often had a "swap o' rhyming ware" together. In writing to Thomson, (October 1793,) Burns says—"The following is by an *old acquaintance* of mine, and I think has merit. The song was never in print, which is so much in your favour. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has much the more credit:—

“ SONG.

BY GAVIN TURNBULL.

O, condescend, dear charming maid,
 My wretched state to view!
 A tender swain to love betray'd,
 And sad despair, by you.

While here, all melancholy,
 My passion I deplore;
 Yet, urged by stern resistless fate,
 I love thee more and more.

I heard of love, and with disdain
 The urchin's power denied;

I laugh'd at every lover's pain,
And mock'd them when they sigh'd.

But how my state is altered !
Those happy day's are o'er ;
For all thy unrelenting hate,
I love thee more and more.

O, yield, illustrious beauty yield !
No longer let me mourn ;
And tho' victorious in the field,
Thy captive do not scorn.

Let generous pity warm thee ;
My wonted peace restore ;
And, grateful, I shall bless thee still,
And love thee more and more."

" The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale, will suit as an English song to the air, *There was a lass, and she was fair*. By-the-by, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS. which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is *an old friend of mine*, I may be prejudiced in his favour ; but I like some of his pieces very much :—

“ THE NIGHTINGALE.

BY G. TURNBULL.

Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove
That ever tried the plaintive strain,
Awake thy tender tale of love,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

For tho' the muses deign to aid,
And teach him smoothly to complain ;
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

All day, with fashion's gaudy sons,
In sport she wanders o'er the plain :
Their tales approves, and still she shuns
The notes of her forsaken swain.

When evening shades obscure the sky,
And bring the solemn hours again,
Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain."

" I shall transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to *Lewis Gordon*.

" LAURA.

BY G. TURNBULL.

Let me wander where I will,
 By shady wood or winding rill ;
 Where the sweetest May-born flowers
 Paint the meadows, deck the bowers ;
 Where the linnet's early song
 Echoes sweet the woods among :
 Let me wander where I will,
 Laura haunts my fancy still.

If at rosy dawn I choose
 To indulge the smiling muse ;
 If I court some cool retreat
 To avoid the noon-tide heat ;
 If beneath the moon's pale ray,
 Thro' unfrequented fields I stray ;
 Let me wander where I will,
 Laura haunts my fancy still.

When at night the drowsy god
 Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
 And to fancy's wakeful eyes
 Bids celestial visions rise ;
 While with boundless joy I rove
 Thro' the fairy-land of love ;
 Let me wander where I will,
 Laura haunts my fancy still."

In Thomson's reply to the communication of Burns, we find the following remark :—" Your friend Mr Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit ; and, as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you will find out some that will answer, as English songs, to the airs yet unprovided."

Burns does not appear to have selected farther from the MS. of his friend Turnbull. The correspondence from which the foregoing is copied, took place towards the close of 1793. Early in the year following, a small pamphlet was printed for the author, entitled " Poems, by Gavin Turnbull, Comedian." This publication, which we have not seen, is nearly the last trace we can discover of the " old acquaintance" of Burns. It is said he afterwards emigrated to America ; and there is every probability that he died there. Turnbull was small in stature, and dark-complexioned.

ISOBEL PAGAN,

MUIRKIRK.

ISOBEL, or TIBBIE PAGAN, is the reputed authoress of the following version of "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes:"—

“ Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rows,
My bonnie dearie.

As I gae'd down the water side
There I met my shepherd lad ;
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid
An' he ca'd me his dearie.

Will ye gang down the water side
And see the waves sae sweetly glide,
Beneath the hazels spreading wide ?
The moon it shines fu' clearly.

Ye shall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Caulf-leather shoon to thy white feet ;
And in my arms yese lie and sleep,
An' ye shall be my dearie.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
Ise gang wi' you my shepherd lad,
And ye may row me in your plaid,
An' I shall be your dearie.

While water wimples to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift sae hie,
Till clay-cauld death shall blin' my e'e,
Ye shall be my dearie.”

This is a sweet little lyric ; and its great superiority to the other known effusions of Isobel, is well calculated to raise a doubt whether it be really hers or not. Cunningham, whom we have had occasion to quote rather frequently, in his “ Songs of Scotland,” appends the following note to it :—“ The song is partly

old and partly new ; what is old is very old, what is new was written by a *gentleman of the name of Pagan*. The *last verse* is very sweet and sincere. To render the song more consistent, I have omitted one verse, in which the heroine is made to express her apprehensions of a moonlight walk by the river side, though she had been before on the banks of the same stream, and ‘row’d sweetly’ in her shepherd’s plaid. It is a very pleasant pastoral, and was once very popular. Its truth can be felt by all who have led out their flocks to pasture by the green braes, on the heathy hills, and by the running streams. Burns says, ‘This song is in the true old Scottish taste, yet I do not know that either air or words were ever in print before.’ It has a border sound ; and the line,

‘ Ise gang wi’ you my shepherd lad,’

is Annandale or Eskdale, and, I believe, good Yarrow.”

It is evident that Cunningham, in penning the above, has written altogether at random. He had heard the song attributed to somebody of the name of Pagan ; and, without being at the trouble of inquiry, immediately supposes the individual to have been a *gentleman*. There were not *two* Pagans, consequently Isobel must be the person alluded to. That the song is *partly old*, is a hypothesis not warranted by any thing peculiar in the verses. The last verse, which he admires as “very sweet and sincere,” was the addition of Burns, to whom we doubt not the whole song is less or more indebted for a pruning. If this is admitted, which is at all events probable, we can the more readily believe the original to have been the production of Isobel Pagan. The verse omitted for its indelicacy, is still farther characteristic of the Poetess of Muirkirk ; and the assertion of Burns, who wrote in 1797, that the air or words were never before in print, is in some degree corroborative of Isobel’s claim to the authorship. The song became popular about that time. Isobel was then in her thirty-seventh year, consequently old enough to have composed the verses. Cunningham, however, is not the only writer who attributes the song, or any portion of it, to a *Pagan*. In the “Harp of Caledonia,” published many years ago, it is directly ascribed

to Isobel. But without pushing the inquiry farther, we proceed to our reminiscences of the Poetess.

In a small volume of doggerel, published by Isobel, we should suppose about 1805, she gives the following account of herself:—

“ I was born near four miles from Nith-head,*
 Where fourteen years I got my bread ;
 My learning it can soon be told,
 Ten weeks, when I was seven years old,
 With a good old religious wife,
 Who lived a quiet and sober life ;
 Indeed, she took of me more pains
 Than some does now of forty bairns.
 With my attention, and her skill,
 I read the Bible no that ill ;
 And when I grew a wee thought mair,
 I read when I had time to spare ;
 But a' the whole tract of my time,
 I found myself inclined to rhyme ;
 When I see mery company,
 I sing a song with mirth and glee,
 And sometimes I the whisky pree,
 But 'deed it's best to let it be.
 A' my faults I will not tell,
 I scarcely ken them a' mysel' ;
 I've come through various scenes of life,
 Yet never was a married wife.”

In this brief sketch Isobel confesses her follies, but wisely refrains from telling all her faults. Little is known of her early years beyond what she has herself recorded. Lame from infancy, she does not appear to have ever been able for laborious industry ; and though well connected, as it is said, none of her relations seem to have befriended her, while the lessons of the “ good old religious wife” do not appear to have made any lasting impression. Nature had bestowed upon her few of those softer features with which the fair sex are generally favoured. Speaking of her in later life, our informant describes her as a woman of “ a very unearthly appearance.” She squinted with one of her eyes—had

* The water of Nith, which takes its rise in the parish of New Cumnock.

a large tumour on her side—and was so deformed in one of the feet as to require crutches when walking. She had great vivacity of spirit, however, and an excellent voice; and it is affirmed that, notwithstanding her ungainly aspect, she was at one period courted by a person of the name of Campbell, to whom she had a child, and was on the eve of marriage when he deserted her.

The greater part of Isobel's life was passed in the neighbourhood of Muirkirk. She first occupied, for a short time, a cottage on the property of Muirsmill, and subsequently removed to one given her by Admiral Keith Stewart, on the banks of the Garpal Water, within a mile or two of the village. The situation was romantic, but must have been exceedingly dreary in winter. The dwelling, constructed out of a low arch, was originally built for a brick-store in connection with Lord Dundonald's tar-works. In this lonely spot, Isobel resided for upwards of thirty years. She was no recluse, however; for night after night the vaulted roof of her humble dwelling rung with the voice of licentious mirth, and the revelries of bacchanalian worshippers, among whom she was the administering priestess. Famed for her sarcastic wit, as well as for her vocal powers, her cottage may be truly said to have been the favourite *howff* of all the drunken wags and "drouthy neebors" in the district. She had no license for the retail of spirits, but usually kept a bottle for the supply of her customers; and by this means she contrived to eke out a subsistence which must otherwise have been sustained from charity—an alternative to which the proud spirit of Isobel would have broken ere it had stooped. Not only was the Poetess known to the convivial in her own neighbourhood, but to many from a great distance; and at no period was her humble dwelling more crowded or more uproarious than during the month of August, when gentlemen from all quarters assemble on the moors of Muirkirk to enjoy the exercise of grouse-shooting. She at all times delighted in whisky-drinking, and in the company of jolly toppers; but the "pouting season," as it is called, was to her a period of more than ordinary enjoyment. Many of the sportsmen not only frequented her cottage, but occasionally sent for her to Muirkirk, where, in return for her songs, her wit, and wicked sarcasm, she

was of course well plied with liquor and rewarded with money. From such visits it was no uncommon thing for Isobel to return to her lonely habitation at midnight, or beyond it, deeply intoxicated, and by a path not the most easy of access. On these occasions she invariably kept up a sort of conversation with herself, giving vent in a loud and fiendish tone to the most dreadful imprecations against some imaginary offender. Whether sober or tipsy she was a woman of violent temper, and her crutch was always ready to obey the impulse of the moment. However much her character and mode of life might be reprobated, few were willing to offend her by their expostulations or remarks; and she attained a sort of ascendancy, which the fear of her sarcasm and her crutch alike combined in enabling her to maintain.

An old clergyman of our acquaintance states that he once visited Tibbie, in company with a young lady. "We found her," adds the writer, "in her den, the most perfect realization of a witch or hag that I ever saw. She had her Bible at her elbow. She told us of a satire that had been written on her, which stated that she was a strumpet when only twelve years of age, and that she would go to hell. 'Oh!' quo Tibbie, 'was not that great nonsense?' She sang a song to us, which she had composed by way of retaliation. The young lady's father and another gentleman came in search of her and me, and were greatly diverted when they found us in Tibbie's abode, listening to her 'screiching out poetic verse.' We gave her half-a-crown each; and she said she was 'aye happy when *decent folk* ca'd on her!'"

The small volume of poems published by Isobel, bear ample testimony to her character and mode of life, though we daresay her amanuensis,* for she could not write herself, was careful to prune the most obnoxious pieces. It is chiefly filled with verses on subjects connected with the sports of the moors, and with complimentary effusions on the gentlemen who were in the habit of frequenting them; such as "the brave Sir J—n M——ll, a knight of great fame," M——y, Captain L——n, C—g—n, and

* Said to have been one William Gemmell, a tailor.

many others.* There is also a variety of songs, but none of them equal in merit to the one already quoted, as having been ascribed to her. Were it possible to procure a perfect copy of Isobel's volume, the question could at once be decided, whether she was the authoress of that song or not. The one we possess is deficient of several pages, and it is doubtful if any other is to be found in the county. Though there is nothing at all tempting in Isobel's collection, we are unwilling to throw it aside without a specimen. The following is among the best, and, with a little pruning, is perhaps not unworthy of recording :—

“ SONG.

How blest has my time been—
 What joys have I known—
 Since wedlock's soft bondage
 Makes Jeanie my own ?†
 How cheerful my heart is,
 How easy my chain,
 Since freedom seems tasteless
 And roving's a pain !
 My Jeanie and me,
 My Jeanie and me ;
 They must borrow their looks
 From Jeanie and me.

Through groves, walks with woodbine,
 Where oft-times we stray,
 Around boys and girls
 They cheerfully play—
 How harmless the sport is
 The wanton ones see ;
 But they borrow their looks
 From my Jeanie and me.
 My Jeanie and me,
 My Jeanie and me ;
 They must borrow their looks
 From my Jeanie and me.

* The volume also contains a song written by James Boswell, the biographer of Johnson, called “ The Laird o' Glenlee ”—a somewhat indelicate satire, which Tibbie used to sing with much humour.

† Isobel was, we suspect, a sad plagiarist. This quatrain forms the introductory verse of a song we have heard, which must have been much older than the days of Tibbie.

To try her soft temper,
 Sometimes I am seen
 To gallant all the day
 With the maids on the green.
 How painful her absence—
 I mean no beguile—
 She meets me at night
 With complacency's smile !
 My Jeanie and me,
 My Jeanie and me ;
 They must borrow their looks
 From my Jeanie and me.

What though on her cheek
 The red rose lose its hue,
 Her sense and good temper
 Bloom all the year through.
 Time, swift as it flies,
 Gives strength to her truth,
 And adds to her mind
 What it steals from her youth.
 My Jeanie and me,
 My Jeanie and me ;
 And who lives so happy
 As Jeanie and me ?"

There are several other songs by Isobel Pagan, not printed in her volume, still in some degree popular among the country people. One of these is

“ THE CROOK AND PLAID.

Ilk lassie has a laddie she lo'es aboon the rest,
 Ilk lassie has a laddie, if she like to confess't,
 That is dear unto her bosom whatever be his trade ;
 But my lover's aye the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

Ilk morn he climbs the mountains, his fleecy flocks to view,
 And hears the lav'rocks chanting, new sprung frae 'mang the dew ;
 His bonnie wee bit doggie, sae frolicsome and glad,
 Rins aye before the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

And when that he is wearied, and lies upon the grass,
 What if that in his plaidie he hide a bonnie lass ?—
 Nae doubt there's a preference due to every trade,
 But commen' me to the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

And when in summer weather he is upon the hill,
 He reads in books of history that learns him meikle skill :

There's nae sic joyous leisure to be had at ony trade,
Save that the laddie follows that wears the crook and plaid.

What though in storms o' winter part o' his flock should die,
My laddie is aye cheerie, and why should not I?
The prospect o' the summer can weel mak' us glad ;
Contented is the laddie that wears the crook and plaid.

King David was a shepherd while in the prime o' youth,
And following the flocks he ponder'd upon truth ;
And when he came to be a king, and left his former trade,
'Twas an honour to the laddie that wears the crook and plaid." *

This is pretty much in the style and spirit of "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes," and perhaps only wants the magic touch of a Burns to render it equal.

Tibbie was a singer much above mediocrity ; and no doubt could do great justice to the execution of her own songs, especially in the estimation of a rustic audience. Her collection, however, was not limited to those of her own "inditing," embracing as it did many of the best of Ramsay and Burns. "The Humours of Glen," which she executed in a style of superior excellence, was allowed to be her masterpiece ; and when so drunk as to be incapable of sitting upright, she used to sing it in her bed ! It is told that a party of gentlemen, entering into a bet on one occasion with the manager of a theatrical party in Ayr,† undertook to produce a person in the county who could sing the "Humours of Glen" in a superior manner to the crack vocalist of the company, who, it is said, flattered himself greatly on account of his peculiar talent for that song. Tibbie was accordingly brought from Muirkirk ; and, we need scarcely add, succeeded in carrying away the prize.

There are numerous anecdotes of the "wicked Tibbie Pagan ;" but, as may be inferred from her character, few of her witty sayings are fit to meet the public eye. In ridicule of her own

* There is another song, entitled "The Crook and Plaid," by H. S. Riddell, sung to the same air. The words, however, are very different.

† There was no regular Theatre in Ayr at this period. The performances used to be given in a range of old buildings at the Town-head. The Theatre now in existence, was built chiefly through the instrumentality of Henry E. Johnston, the Scottish *Roscus*.

deformity, she gave herself the *sobriquet* of “Pistol Fit,” which she wove into a rhyme descriptive of herself, beginning

“Ken ye ocht o’ Pistol Fit—Pistol Fit!”

She was extremely sarcastic, and could scarcely allow herself on any occasion to speak of individuals or circumstances in the language of common observation. Having gone on one occasion to see the Muirkirk volunteers go through their exercises, Tibbie was met on her return by the Rev. Mr Shepherd, then minister of the parish, who thus accosted her:—“Well, Isobel, were you seeing the volunteers?” “A tweel was I, sir,” she replied. “And what do you think of them?” inquired the minister. “’Deed,” answered Tibbie, “I dinna ken weel what to think o’ them; there’s a grand squad, and an awkward squad, and a *damn’d* awkward squad; and auld John M’M——n, o’ the W——d, is b——g awa’ his lane at the back o’ the dyke!” That is to say, he was performing the duties of fogleman at the time.

Tibbie feared neither man nor devil, and had scarcely any reverence for religion or its professors. On a sacramental Sabbath, when the Rev. Mr —— was preaching in the open air, Tibbie happened to pass close by the tent from which he was speaking; and, hearing that he was endeavouring to clear up some knotty “point o’ faith,” she paused upon her crutch, and, casting a sarcastic look at the reverend gentleman, exclaimed in a truly satiric tone—“Ye’re *borin’* awa’ I see!”

Like Burns, she seems to have lost no opportunity of satirizing and exposing the frailties of the clergy. A reverend gentleman, assistant to Mr Shepherd, and who took more delight in shooting moorfowl* than in performing his spiritual duties, was celebrated in one of her pieces under the designation of “Jumpin’ S****l B****n.” Yet, though irreligious in the extreme, it is said, as illustrative of her retentive memory, that Tibbie could almost repeat the whole of the Bible.

If any one did her an injury, the offender was sure to be

* He was a capital shot. On one occasion, the 12th of August, though occurring on a Saturday, he nevertheless went out, and bagged twelve brace of grouse.

rewarded with a couplet ; and, if there was a “ hole in a` his coat,” he would have been wise to have refrained from indulging in remarks to the prejudice of Tibbie, who seldom failed to repay the compliment with interest. A certain farmer, not far from her own neighbourhood, had chosen to speak of her in terms not altogether misapplied ; but he of all others ought probably to have held his tongue on the subject. The impromptu of Tibbie did not tend to exculpate him :—

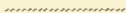
“ Mr —— in the Kyle,
Ca’d me a common —— ;
But if he had not tried himsel’,
He wadna been sae sure !”

We are encroaching on what Allan Cunningham calls the “ border land” of impropriety. We shall therefore close our reminiscences, lest we trespass farther.

It is an old but an excellent proverb which inculcates that “ no ill should be spoken of the dead.” Poor Isobel, with all her follies, had, we doubt not, her own redeeming qualities ; and it is possible to conceive, even in her very recklessness and contempt of the formalities of life, the workings of a mind naturally strong, and of feelings perverted but not destroyed. After her fourteenth year she appears to have had no preceptor—no guardian—to foster the instructions of the “ good old religious wife” under whom she was taught to read. Driven upon the sea of life without a helm—deprived by nature even of those personal accomplishments which are the birthright of her sex—and deceived as she appears to have early been by the promises of one who had probably no intention of ever fulfilling them, there is after all no great wonder that she became the sardonic worshipper of Bacchus represented. Solitude is in general the nurse of “ meek-eyed Contemplation ;” but with her it appears to have been the food of the Furies.

Notwithstanding her dissolute life, Isobel lived to an age attained by few. She died on the 3d November 1821, in the eightieth year of her age. Extensively known for her eccentricity of character, her death created considerable noise, and crowds of every class flocked from all quarters to her funeral. Her

remains were conveyed to the churchyard of Muirkirk in a cart. The day, it was remarked, was extremely stormy—so much so, that the procession could scarcely move on. A stone has been erected over her grave, inscribed with her name, her age, and date of death. When at Muirkirk, we were curious enough to visit the scene of many of her revelries—the little cottage on the banks of the Garpal. It is still inhabited; and at the door is one of those querns, or stones, with a hollow like a mortar, used in days of yore, before mills were invented, for the purpose of pounding bear into meal. The people of the dwelling assured us that Isobel had a peculiar respect for the stone, and that, heavy as it was, it had been carefully conveyed along with her in all her “flittings.”



GEORGE CAMPBELL.

THE history of GEORGE CAMPBELL affords few materials for biographical detail. He was born, we have been informed, in Kilmarnock, about the year 1761; but who his father was, or what profession he followed, we have not been able to learn. He died, it is said, when George was only a few years of age. The young Poet was brought up with his mother, whose maiden name was Janet Parker, and who earned a scanty subsistence by winding yarn for the carpet-works. Judging from the nature of the circumstances in which he was thus placed, we may naturally suppose that the education he received in his juvenile days was very limited; and the progress of his youthful studies must have been impeded in no small degree by the poverty of his situation. We are sometimes told that genius, like the snow-drop, rises majestically amid the storms of adversity; and no doubt individuals, who have struggled with complicated misfortunes, might be pointed out who have risen to eminence in the various departments of

literature and science ; but ease and affluence, with their attendant comforts, we should think are more congenial to the dawns of genius than want and misery. How many may have pined or perished in adversity, who, had their lot been more fortunate, might have improved or delighted myriads with the productions of their minds, and gained immortality for themselves—and how many whose names are enshrined in our remembrance have sunk prematurely into the grave, the victims of disease engendered by cheerless poverty ! What was it that brought the admirable Kirk White to an early grave ? What was it that caused the youthful Bruce to pine in obscurity ? And what was it that induced the unfortunate Tannahill to seek relief in self-destruction ? It was (to use the language of Gray)

“ Chill penury that repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of their souls.”

Campbell, like these authors, had the misfortune to be placed in a situation somewhat unfavourable for mental improvement. He was bred to the sedentary and laborious avocation of shoemaking—an occupation little calculated to yield him the means of procuring information, or to afford him time for the perusal of such books as he might be fortunate enough to procure. Being of rather a religious cast of mind, and desirous, perhaps, of bettering his condition in life, he formed the idea, while yet a young man, of qualifying himself for the ministry ; and, with the view to procure the means necessary for prosecuting his studies at College, he laboured, it is said, at his trade not only very hard during the day, but frequently during the night, when his neighbours were asleep. By thus working industriously, he raised himself above the occupation of shoemaking, and became teacher of a small school in Kilmarnock. We have been told—and it ought not to be forgotten—that he was greatly befriended by the Rev. Dr Mackinlay of Kilmarnock, who assisted him in the pursuit of knowledge, by lending him books, and otherwise placing within his reach the means of intellectual improvement. Probably, too, with the hope of realizing a little money to aid in defraying his expenses at College, he collected and

published his poetical productions in the year 1787. They were printed in Kilmarnock at the press of John Wilson, from which had been issued, in the preceding year, the first edition of the poems of Robert Burns. The book is of a 12mo size, containing 132 pages, and is entitled "Poems on Several Occasions, by George Campbell." In the preface, the reader is informed "that it is the production of a tradesman, obliged at the time it was composed to labour for his daily maintenance," and that his sole intention in writing the various pieces in the volume, was "to celebrate virtue, to ridicule vice, and to paint the works of nature and the manners of mankind." There is little perhaps in his effusions which fastidious critics would reckon truly poetic; but, though they display not richness of imagination, depth or originality of thought, elegance of diction, or any of the higher qualities that constitute poetical excellence, yet they are not deficient in merit, and exhibit in numerous instances much plain good sense, a shrewdness of observation, and a chasteness of expression, which the works of many minor Poets are entirely without. The most lengthened poem in the volume is founded on the Book of Esther, and bears that name; but, with the exception of a few of its passages, it is inferior, considered as poetry, to some of his other productions. The following quotation, which shows that he surveyed the beauties and felt the charms of external nature with the fervency of a Poet, is taken from a piece entitled

" A MORNING CONTEMPLATION.

Awake my soul! enjoy the morning fair,
 Nor fear that noxious vapours taint the air!
 Mild is the western breeze, the sky serene,
 Behold, and taste the beauty of the scene!
 Wake Contemplation! widely ranging pow'r!
 This is the time to take thy distant tour.
 Mount, O my Muse! aloft on soaring wing,
 And, grateful, to the great Creator sing.
 O Pow'r Supreme! who caused the cheering light
 First spring from chaos and the shades of night!
 By whom the planets in their courses roll,
 And day and night, by turns, invade the pole!
 Dispel each gloom, my languid spirit raise,
 And teach my feeble voice to sing thy praise.

Soon as the night draws back her dusky shrouds,
 And cheerful day dispels the opening clouds ;
 So, soon the rangers of the forest fly,
 Starting affrighted at the opening sky !
 Far from the cheerful haunts of man they rove,
 And seek the gloomy thickets of the grove ;
 There lie conceal'd in dens, shut out from day,
 And wait returning night to seek their prey.
 Too much, alas ! like these, with sad surprise,
 The lawless sons of riot lift their eyes ;
 Who love the dark, the deepest shades of night,
 And shun, like beasts of prey, the hated light.
 Do not, my soul, their happiness envy,
 Their dear-bought pleasures, follow'd with a sigh.
 May thou delight at early dawn to rise,
 And see the growing light adorn the skies ;
 To Nature's God thy cheerful homage pay,
 And grateful thank Him for returning day.
 With mind unclouded, like the morn serene,
 Walk forth with pleasure, and enjoy the scene.

Soon as the feather'd tribes the light espy,
 They flock together, and in concert fly :
 These, in their season, warble forth their notes,
 And pour the numbers through their little throats.
 Oft have I heard them from the flow'ry thorn,
 And hazel green, salute the rising morn.
 Oft in mid air, the lark, tho' far from sight,
 Has struck my ear with wonder and delight.
 Ethereal songsters ! let my soul arise,
 Like you, from earth, nor stop in middle skies ;
 On pinions strong thy steady course pursue,
 'Mong these bright orbs night only gives to view.
 A path immortal Newton once explored,
 And saw with wonder, and with praise adored !
 A path by heavy mortals seldom trod,
 Which leads, by Nature's works, to Nature's God."

* * * * *

Another little piece, which we have perused with pleasure, and which we cannot resist quoting, is

“ OSSIAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN.

O thou who rollest through the azure field
 In glory bright, round as my father's shield !
 From whence, O sun ! the fountain of thy streams,
 The eternal source of thy transparent beams !

The stars diminish'd from thy presence fly,
 And hide themselves in caverns of the sky.
 The silver moon, turn'd pale before thy sight,
 Sinks in the western wave her borrow'd light.
 But thou alone still runs thy ample round,
 Nor can companion of thy course be found.
 The mountain oak with age will fall away ;
 The solid mountains will themselves decay ;
 The ocean shrinks and grows upon the coast ;
 The moon herself in heaven is often lost :
 Constant the same, such change thou never know'st,
 But in thy radiant course rejoicing go'st.
 When earth is dark with tempests in the sky,
 When thunders roll and the red lightnings fly,
 Thou dost in beauty from the clouds appear,
 And mock'st the storm, which makes the mighty fear.

But ah ! in vain to Ossian comes thy light !
 No more thy cheering beams refresh his sight ;
 Whether thy golden hair flows on the morn,
 Or trembling beams the gates of West adorn ;
 But thou, like me, may'st only have thy day ;
 Like me, thy strength will with thy years decay ;
 Thou yet shalt sleep within thy cloudy hall,
 And there, regardless, hear the morning call !
 Do thou, O Sun ! exult then in the prime
 Of youthful strength ; this is thy favour'd time !
 Dark and unlovely seem the coming years ;
 And, like the lonely moon, old age appears,
 With beams which faintly pierce the broken clouds,
 While the high hills are wrapt in misty shrouds ;
 When the cold blast, which chills the hardy swain,
 Comes from the frozen north upon the plain ;
 The traveller, weary for the coming day,
 Shrinks in the middle of his lonely way !"

These extracts are perhaps sufficient to furnish an idea of Campbell's ability in poesy ; but, before closing the volume, we shall present to the notice of the reader another poem worthy of being preserved on account of the graphic and faithful manner in which he has delineated the social and industrious habits of our Scottish peasantry on a winter evening. In some points it reminds us forcibly of Ferguson's "Farmer's Ingle;" and, though not so poetical as that justly admired production, yet the picture is more extended, and is as true to nature :—

" A WINTER EVENING.

SCENE—*A Farm-House in the Country.*

By Arran point now sunk the orb of light,
 And fast comes on the long and dreary night.
 Home to the house the cattle take their way,
 And leave the field with the departing day ;
 To shun the nightly cold, by instinct led,
 They gather round, and seek their wonted shed ;
 Nor seek in vain ! the maids extend their care ;
 This is your province, O ye simple Fair !
 Close to their stalls the hungry cattle bind,
 Heap the provision ; to your charge be kind ;
 Feel their distress ; alleviate their woe ;
 And thus a spirit truly generous show.
 Ev'n queens, like you, have led the bleating train,
 Or fed the lowing herd upon the plain ;
 At night their charge conducted from the field,
 And press'd the copious udder in the *bield* ;
 The grateful tribute in the pail received,
 And in the simple ways of nature lived.

Nor do the clowns less of the labour share ;
 These to the hardy horse extend their care ;
 One from the stable to the river leads
 And satisfies with drink the thirsty steeds ;
 Those in the house an equal care display,
 The manger fill with corn, the crib with hay.
 The master loves to see his cattle good ;
 Hard they must work, but are not spared of food ;
 In this he strives to be above the rest,
 And thinks he's victor when his horse looks best.

* * * *

The cattle now are fodder'd—all is quiet ;
 Dinner's set down ;* they for the master wait ;
 He comes, and sees them round the table closed,
 Down with them sits, and lifts his hand composed—
 Adores the goodness of the God of heaven,
 And seeks His blessing on the mercy given ;
 Thanks Him, with grateful mind, for what is past,
 And humbly pleads such favours still may last.
 And now the *meal* begun, they soon assuage,
 With wholesome food, the force of hunger's rage.

* It is the custom in the country, in the winter season, not to take dinner till the twilight.

Here *kail*, a dish so much and justly prized,
 Too good for those by whom they are despised.
 Nor want they *beef*, from their own hills supplied,
 By England boasted, and by France envied ;
Cakes and *potatoes* next, upon the board
 Are heap'd in plenty, and good cheer afford.
 Such food let England's well-fed sons deride,
 But long may SCOTIA still esteem 't her pride :
 Her daughters this way fed are not less fair,
 Her gallant sons an equal courage share :
 And at the siege, or in the bloody field,
 As bold attack, and are as slow to yield ;
 With souls intrepid, as great dangers dare,
 And equal bear the hardships of a war.
 Heaven grant in plenty they such victuals share,
 And be contented with their homely fare !

The family satiate and the dinner closed,
 Again the master sees them all composed ;
 His voice he raises, and he thanks his God
 For all the favours upon them bestow'd—
 Prays that His kindness ever may abide :
 That He, through life, may always be their guide :
 Owns that by sin they're utterly undone,
 And hopes He'll save them only through his SON.

Soon is the table drawn, and all, with care,
 To what's their labour for the night repair ;
 To yoke the *wheel* one of the maids applies,
 And to prepare the *wool* another flies ;
 Thus they alternate work, and each relieve,
 Lighten the labour, and the time deceive :
 Nor drop the *cards*, nor quit the buzzing *wheel*,
 'Till night see numerous *broches* heap the *creel*.

Think not this theme below the Muse's praise,
 While scenes like these Britannia's glory raise.
 O, were the Muse but equal to the theme !
 O, could her song but give such scenes to fame !
 From hence the *yarn* to form her cloth is brought,
 So much admired and with such keenness sought ;
 From hence her carpets, that with Persia vie,
 By far more lasting, and as rich in dye ;
 From hence those coverings, which from cold secure
 Alike the splendid rich and humble poor ;
 From hence materials all that cloth to rear
 Which kings and princes may be proud to wear.

The thrifty mistress will not idle stand,
 But with the distaff occupies her hand ;
 Her eldest daughter at the needle sits,
 And by her side the *herd* his stocking knits.
 All hands at labour, none their task refuse ;
 The day-toil'd ploughman sweats and mends his shoes :
 Should these be good, yet no less is his care
 To make the *broches*, or the *flails* repair :
 The power of Ind'lence for a while is gone,
 And here the knight Industry reigns alone.

Above the rest the goodman sits and views
 Their various labours, tells the public news ;
 How all the Dutch are in a wild uproar,
 And Prussia's far-famed monarch is no more :
 Then speaks of fields o'erflow'd and deluged towns ;
 Of mighty earthquakes, and of burnt balloons ;
 Of foreign treaties, and domestic broils ;
 Of Placemen's power and Opposition's wiles :
 Applauds their actions or their conduct blames,
 Free as he thinks, nor fears their mighty names :
 Till all admire and judge their master fit
 To rule the nation, and as wise as PITT.

The country news next every tongue employs,
 The faults of maidens and the tricks of boys.
 Is it from love of scandal or from spite,
 That others' failings give so much delight ?
 Or do they think that they will raise their fame
 To what degree they can their neighbours blame ?
 And so more keen to have the faults made known
 In others' conduct, than to mend their own ?
 If aught be true, the rest they can devise,
 And for one fact you'll hear a hundred lies.
 Each freely speaks, affirming what he says,
 And the same story's told a thousand ways.

Marriage and love afford a lasting source
 Of pleasing chat ; 'bout this they long discourse.
 There's not a luckless maid by lovers scorn'd,
 Or one, more happy, by her swain adorn'd
 With rings and ribbons, purchased at the fair,
 To grace her hands or ornament her hair ;
 Who present is or soon will be a bride,
 But must the censure of their tongues abide ;
 Have all the secrets of their life disclosed,
 And praised or blamed as judges are disposed.

The theme exhausted, no more pleasure brings,
 Then songs begin, and each alternate sings,
 On many themes they raise the vocal lay ;
 But Love and Murder bear the greatest sway.
 They sing the woes that lovers have endured,
 Of some too faithful, and of some perjured ;
 With death at last the mournful garlands close,
 And serious cautions how to shun such woes !
 So long the story, the distress so deep,
 That ere it ends the boys are all asleep ;
 And these awake have on their minds a gloom
 Which fits them for the fearful things to come.

For no amusement now the song supplies,
 But tales of ghosts from murder'd lovers rise :
 These fearful are ; more fearful still succeed :
 The face grows pale, the hair stands up with dread,
 Till nightly fairies seem to dance around,
 And clowns believe they're on enchanted ground.
 What pity masters should such things allow
 E'er to be spoke, far less believed as true ;
 Such fancied stories fill the tender mind
 With fearful thoughts, that leave their stamp behind ;
 Such an impression on the youth they bear,
 That they, thro' life, are always slaves to fear.

The clock strikes nine, and now all work's laid *by* ;
 The boys, awaking, for their supper cry :
 When this is got, then 'tis the master's care,
 As he began, to close the day with pray'r.
 Now all the family high their voices raise,
 And sing, in solemn notes, Jehovah's praise ;
 He reads a portion of the sacred Word,
 Then calls, in pray'r, upon the mighty Lord.
 Let wretches laugh—let them, with jests profane,
 Mock the devotion of the humble swain ;
 He knows he serves a God who rules the skies,
 And can their laughter and their jests despise :
 This is his glory, it should be their shame
 To mock the worship of a God supreme.

And now the clowns to feed their horses go ;
 Maids to their charge a like attention show :
 When these are out, the children are undress'd,
 And with their parents all retire to rest.
 The servants soon return, their work is done,
 And find the master from the kitchen gone.

Short is the time, but it is well employ'd,
 Nor unrefined the pleasures here enjoy'd :
 These are the moments sacred unto love,
 And shall not lovers their own time improve ?
 Yes ! now they meet, and from the rest retire,
 With soft expressions fan the rising fire.
 Nor need those blush to own the virtuous flame,
 Whose love is equal, and their mind the same :
 This glads the heart, and oft more pleasure brings
 To humble peasants than to mighty kings.
 But ah ! to some whom jealous fears oppress.
 This time is sad, the source of new distress !
 He sees his love gone with another swain,
 Strives to detect them, but he strives in vain !
 Love, still more cunning, jealousy beguiles,
 Eludes her arts, and disappoints her wiles :
 From hence such scenes arise as are express'd
 By RAMSAY'S Muse, and in his numbers best."

The following is among the best of his lyrical pieces :—

“ ODE.

ON CHEERFULNESS.

Say, ye sages, where to find
 A calm, content, and cheerful mind ;
 Or, with all your wit profound,
 How to keep the bliss when found.

Will heaps of gold or silver bright
 E'er afford the gay delight ?
 Or power and wealth together join'd
 Dispel the sorrows of the mind ?

Has Honour, when attain'd, the charm,
 'Gainst discontent the soul to arm ?
 Or is the man who laurel wears,
 Still exempt from shedding tears ?

Will Science with her many rules,
 Or all the learning of the schools,
 E'er to the utmost satisfy
 The minds that after knowledge pry ?

Or can the Muse, with pleasant song,
 The much-wish'd happiness prolong,
 Still cause the cheerful numbers flow.
 Nor utter one sad strain of wo ?

Can noisy mirth or flowing bowls,
The chief solace of jovial souls,
Cause every cloud of sorrow fly,
And not be follow'd with a sigh?

Is Love, tho' happy, always free
From anxious thoughts or jealousy?
Or does it yield a lasting joy—
A sweetness that can never cloy?

These, with united voice, reply,
' In us the bliss did never lie ;
We know the flush of transient mirth ;
But this you seek grows not on earth.

' From heaven the bliss must be obtain'd—
The happy man with guilt unstain'd,
Who treads religion's sacred ways,
To him it comes, with him it stays.' "

Little more remains to be told, as far as we know, of the history of George Campbell. After attending the ordinary period at College, he was licensed to preach the gospel, and was fortunate enough to be appointed pastor to a congregation of Burghers in Stockbridge, near Dunbar. A friend of ours, who heard him deliver a sermon in the Gallows-knowe* Church, Kilmarnock, to a crowded audience, informs us that he displayed considerable ability and zeal as a preacher. About the time he was licensed for the ministry, he married a young woman, belonging it is said to his native town. With her he repaired to Stockbridge, taking along with him his aged mother, for whom he evinced the most tender affection. Campbell had now the prospect of enjoying a greater degree of comfort than it was his lot in early life to experience; but earthly felicity is seldom without its alloy, and this he bitterly felt in the death of his mother, which occurred in a very sudden manner. She had been left alone in the house on a Sabbath, when the family were at church, and her clothes accidentally coming in contact with the fire, she was so dreadfully burnt that she expired soon after. We are not aware if Campbell, after leaving Kilmarnock, devoted any portion of his time to

* So called, we believe, from its having been the place of execution in times prior to the demolition of the feudal system.

the composition of poetry. Subjects of deeper interest now occupied his attention; and, while at Stockbridge, he published a collection of sermons, more with the desire, perhaps, (as he hints in his preface,) of being useful as a teacher of Christianity than distinguished as an author. Be this as it may, the work, in our opinion, from the nature of its contents, and the plain yet interesting manner in which it is written, is such as would do honour to more celebrated names. It is an 8vo volume of 479 pages, and was printed at Edinburgh, in 1816, by A. Balfour, Merchant Court, and is entitled "Sermons on Interesting Subjects, by George Campbell, minister of the gospel, Stockbridge, near Dunbar."

In appearance, Campbell was somewhat slender. He died of consumption, at Stockbridge, about the year 1818.

JAMES FISHER,

THE BLIND MUSICIAN.

THE attainments of a Blacklock or a Moyes—the one a poet and a scholar, the other a lecturer on chemistry—are both noble examples of the triumph of intellect over circumstances even the most adverse. The obscure name of *Fisher* ought not perhaps to be mentioned in the same breath with men whose talents attracted no small degree of notice while in life, and whose memories are not likely to be soon forgotten; yet, when the peculiar disadvantage under which he laboured is taken into consideration, we do not see why his humble merit should not also be appreciated. Like Blacklock and Moyes,* he lost his sight

* The following account of Dr Moyes, lecturer on chemistry, is abridged from the Biographical Sketches accompanying the "Edinburgh Portraits," lately given to the public by the publisher of this work:—

in infancy, from the effects of small-pox, with which he was seized when about two years of age. Unlike them, however, he had not the advantage of cultivated intercourse, or the society of the learned, but appears to have been left to grope his way in mental as well as physical darkness. Who his parents were, or what their circumstances, we have not been informed. All we know is, that he was born somewhere on the confines of Galloway, probably about the year 1759; and that, having early given his attention to music, it became not only a source of amusement to him, but throughout life the chief means of gaining a subsistence. He came to Ochiltree, where he resided for a number of years, about 1788, and was there known and universally respected as a person of unblemished reputation. In the exercise of his profession as a musician, he was of course an indispensable adjunct at

“ Dr Moyes was born in the year 1750, at Kirkcaldy, in the county of Fife. What station in society his father held, and even what profession he followed, we are not told. It seems probable, however, that he was possessed of some property, because his son was sent to College and enjoyed the benefit of a liberal education. He lost his sight when about three years old, by the small-pox, so that he hardly retained any recollection of having ever seen. Yet he stated, that he remembered having once observed a water-mill in motion, and that, even at that early age, his attention was attracted by the circumstance of the water flowing in one direction, while the wheel turned round in the opposite. This he represented as having staggered his infant mind before he could comprehend it. He was sent to school, but what was his progress there is unknown. From thence he was removed to the University, where, judging from his subsequent acquirements, it is to be presumed he made considerable progress. One thing is certain, that in early life he undoubtedly acquired the fundamental principles of mechanics, music, and the languages; and displayed a knowledge of geometry, algebra, optics, astronomy, chemistry, and, in short, of most of the branches of the Newtonian philosophy. He seems to have delighted in, and to have had a great taste for mechanics, for we are told that at a very early age he made himself acquainted with the use of edge-tools so perfectly, that he was able to make little wind-mills, and even constructed a loom with his own hands.

“ His first attempt at delivering public lectures commenced at Edinburgh, where he lectured on the theory and practice of music; but not meeting with the encouragement he expected, he relinquished the design. What was the more immediate cause of his resolving to deliver a course of lectures on chemistry, is unknown; but it was probably the interesting and miscellaneous nature of the subjects treated of—the reputation of Dr Black, professor of that science in Edinburgh, who was then in his zenith—and the uncommon avidity with which his class was attended by the students. As he was the first blind man who proposed to lecture on chemistry, the novelty of the proposal

the "merry-makings" of the villagers, and of the peasantry for many miles round the neighbourhood.

James had also acquired a taste for poetry as well as music; and his leisure hours were frequently devoted to the Muse. Several editions of his poems were published. The volume in our possession, and the only specimen of his works we have seen, was printed at Dumfries in 1792, and is entitled "Poems on Various Subjects." As the work of a blind, uneducated man, it is no doubt curious; but its chief attraction is a series of "Familiar Epistles between the author and Thomas Walker," whom we had occasion to notice in our brief memoir of "William Simpson," as the writer of the "trimming letter" to Burns. Until Fisher's volume was kindly handed to us by an hon. gentleman* in Ayrshire, who takes a great interest in every thing connected with

naturally excited curiosity and attention. He left Scotland in 1779, and directed his route towards England, where he spent six years in making a tour through it. He delivered lectures not only in the capital, but almost in every city and considerable town. In 1785, he set sail for America, where he was received with open arms, his fame having gone before him; even the churches were thrown open to him to lecture in. This tour is understood to have been a very profitable speculation.

"On his return to his native country, he took a house in Edinburgh, where he resided for some time; and, in 1790, crossed the Channel for Ireland, where he remained a few months, highly gratified by the reception he met with. He afterwards took up his residence at Manchester, where he spent the remainder of his life, and died there on the 10th of August 1807, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, having bequeathed his fortune to his brother, one of the Episcopal clergymen of St Paul's Chapel, then in the Cowgate, Edinburgh, who is alluded to in that wicked poem, the 'Town Eclogue'—Edinburgh, 1804—written by the Rev. William Aureol Hay Drummond. The Cowgate Chapel, from the eloquent discourses of that amiable clergyman, the Rev. Mr Alison, was usually crowded whenever he preached. In allusion to this, Hay says—

' But things are better, where each Sabbath-day
Gay Fashion's coaches crowd the Chapel's way;
Save when Old Moses' [Moyes'] dreary, drowsy drone,
Makes maidens titter, and Sir William [Forbes] groan.'

"Dr Moyes was rather tall in his person, and of a swarthy complexion. His temper was cheerful, and his conversation interesting. He was remarkably abstemious. He had a natural dislike to animal food of every description, and tasted no ardent spirits nor fermented liquors.

* The Hon. Roger Rollo, brother of the present Lord Rollo. He is one of the original members of the Ayrshire Burns Club; and, himself a Poet, has seldom failed to pay homage to the Bard by the contribution of an annual ode to his memory.

Burns, we were not aware that any of the tailor's poetical effusions had ever seen the light, save the epistle already mentioned. They are after all of no poetical value, being mere doggerel; still they are in some degree interesting as marking the era of Burns, and affording, as they do, no bad index to the feeling entertained towards him by the rhyming fraternity of his own immediate neighbourhood. In the familiar epistles of Fisher and Walker, are embodied not merely their own sentiments, regarding the irreligious and immoral tendency of the Poet's writings, but of the truly orthodox generally of the period. One or two extracts from the series will be sufficient for our purpose. In his introductory Epistle to Tom, Fisher proceeds in a very laudatory strain:—

“ In foreign climes I ne'er did stray,
 The Muses nine I ne'er heard play,
 Nor yet on Mount Parnassus lay,
 Nor e'er did goam
 These waters sweet, dear Tam, I say,
 O' Helicon.

Therefore I'm no a poet bred,
 But this ere now ye aiblins dred;
 Yet, Thamas, sometimes in my bed,
 When drousy een
 Sleep closely steeks, I try that trade
 A wee fu' keen.
 * * *

Wow man! ye hae some unco turns;
 I heard some things ye sent to Burns,
 In whilk ye gae him gay ill puns
 To red, I think;
 But what they were, my muse adjourns
 To tell distinct.

Ye're no like some that I could name,
 To please the wicked mak' their theme;
 But Tam, what tho' they raise their fame
 Among that race?
 They in the main are unco lame,
 When scant o' grace.
 * * *

But Tam, sic warks let us forbear,
 Our time is not to be lang here,

We to anither shore maun steer
 When this life's doon :
 O may it be to yon blest sphere,
 Ayont the moon !
 * * *

Ochiltree, Feb. 11, 1789.'

Tom duly returns the compliment in his reply :—

“ Gif ye were never far a-fiel',
 But bred aside your mither's wheel,
 Wha Mount Parnassus ne'er did speel,
 Then I'm to blame
 Gif e'er I kent o' sic a chiel
 Brought up at hame !
 * * *

Ye tell me I am nane o' those
 That lead the van wi' heaven's foes :
 'Tis true, my pen does not expose
 My soul in sin ;
 But oh, alas ! no mortal knows
 My heart within !

But let me never lead astray
 Poor mortals on in Satan's way ;
 Sic hellish houn's that catch the prey
 For him sae fast.
 Are waiting on a dreadfu' day, ^
 I fear, at last.

How pitifu' to see the sight—
 The sprightly gallant, trim and tight,
 Whase head's a shining lamp o' light,
 Wi' bonnie face,
 An' heart as dark as mirk midnight,
 For want o' grace !

That heart is hard that never bleeds
 To see the devil's garden weeds,
 Wi' learned lumber in their heads,
 Gaun doun the hill,
 To get their wages for their deeds
 In torments still.

I shudder at the awfu' thought !
 A man to sell his soul for nought !
 This warld's gear by sic is bought
 At countless cost,

Since we can ne'er redeem by ought
A soul when lost.

* * *

Saints now-a-days may weep and mourn,
To think how ages yet unborn,
Will see religion turn'd to scorn
By Robin's books ;
An' a' the Bible reft an' torn
By clergy fouks.

Hill of Ochiltree, March 25, 1789."

Proud of Tom's Epistle, Fisher remarks in his next :—

" I waited not to look the date,
But blythely I a march did beat,
E'en straught awa', Tam, owre the gate
Whilk ye ken weel,
An' shaw'd them to our neebour Pate,*
That couthie chiel.

About the time the school did scale,
Afore the laddie got his kail,
To read them owre he did na fail,
An' thought wi' me,
That ye cou'd tell a knacky tale
In poetic.

Dear Tam, whare gat ye sic a pow ?
Did it doun frae Parnassus row ?
An' on your shouthers, i' the how,
Light wi' a dad ?
Whether or no, may ye lang clow
The same, my lad.

* * *

I ken few like ye ony where,
Ye're sic a dainty chiel an' rare—
Wi' ony bard ye may compare
That I do ken ;
Let me, whan ye hae time to spare,
Ken how ye fen'.

Ochiltree, 1789."

The second reply of Tom Walker we give nearly at full length :—

* Patrick Simpson, of whom some account is given in the memoir of his brother. He was then newly installed into the situation of parish teacher.

“ I gat your letter, honest Jamie !
 Wow man ! an unco lift ye gie me !
 How hie a ferly wad ye hae me ?
 Come, let me doun,
 Or itherwise ye must get to me
 An air balloon.

I'm hoised a wally wipe indeed,
 But I'm say dizzy i' the head,
 I'll no stay lang up here I dread—
 An', gif I fa',
 My doun-come, sir, to me will breed,
 I fear, a claw.

What need ye screw me up sae hie,
 Just as if nane could equal me,
 A man o' mean an' low degree,
 Scarce taught to read ;
 Yet sic a noise as there must be
 About my head.

* * *

But lest we shou'd cast out wi' ither,
 (Wha were as thick an' pack thegither
 As ae auld wife had been our nither)
 I must tak' care ;
 Sae wi' you, sir, my poet brither,
 I'll flyte nae mair.

* * *

As sure as twa an' thre mak' five,
 This is a drift I mean to drive,*
 To get some feeding for my hive
 O' feckless fouks ;
 But I may tak' the gee belyve,
 For a' my jokes.

I'm aye sae thrang, an' scant o' cash,
 An' that Will Who-ca't, lazy hash,
 Took up some drunt, an' wad na fash
 To write for me,
 Whilk did na please that weel my pash—
 But what cared he.

The first time ye gang owre the gate,
 Gie my kin' compliments to Pate,

* He proposed publishing his poems.

Wha, when I meet him, soon or late,
 Aye sport gies me—
 I scarce e'er saw a fallow yet
 Sae fou o' glee.*

Ochiltree, 1789."

Few or rather none of the pieces in Fisher's volume merit notice as literary productions. The only verses at all passable, are those in answer to Maine's celebrated song of Logan Kirk, which, first sung at Vauxhall, had then become deservedly popular:—

" Sweet nymph that sat on Logan plains,
 An' sang, of late, in mournfu' strains,
 There's news in town your heart will raise,
 An' mak' you blythe on Logan braes.

Auld Kath'rine's come to peacefu' terms,
 An' Britain's laying down her arms;
 An' your brave lad has changed his claes,
 An's comin' down to Logan braes:

Resolved hereafter to abide
 Wi' you at hame, by Logan side,
 To herd the sheep, an' gather slaes,
 An' daut his dear on Logan braes.

Sae now be blythe, ye'll come nae mair
 Alane, frae either kirk or fair;
 But wi' your lad, in lo'esome gays,
 Will pass the time on Logan braes."

Besides his poetical attempts, Fisher published two other volumes in prose; one of which was entitled, "Meditations on a Spring Day," the other, "Meditations on a Winter Day." These works we have not seen, and consequently can say nothing of their merits. The author removed from Ochiltree about 1809. He proceeded from thence to the borders of England. It is not known whether he is dead or alive; but, if still a sojourner on *terra firma*, he must be upwards of eighty years of age. Fisher composed a variety of tunes for the violin. Besides Tom Walker, he also corresponded with Lapraik, with Gavin Dalzell, Old

* Mr Simpson, though considerably in advance of threescore-and-ten, is yet a living evidence of the truth of this remark.

Cumnoek, and with *Joseph Cochran*, a poet, or poetaster, who flourished in Strathaven about the same prolific era.

The history of THOMAS WALKER, THE POETICAL TAILOR, affords, as far as we know, almost no materials whatever for biography. He resided long in the parish of Ochiltree, maintaining, in the words of Mr Patrick Simpson, “ a respectable character for sobriety, honesty, and *glee*.” He died many years ago, and was buried at Sorn, of which place he is believed to have been a native. The only work he is understood to have published was a pamphlet, entitled “ A Picture of the World.”

ALEXANDER TAIT,

THE TARBOLTON POET.

SAUNDERS TAIT was another rhyming “ knight of the needle,” who ought not perhaps to be omitted among the numerous band of poetasters, whom the fame and genius of Burns called into ephemeral existence. He was truly a contemporary of Burns ; and, residing as he did for many years in the village of Tarbolton, knew him personally and intimately, and had the honour besides of being selected as the object of a few satirical couplets by the Poet. These have not been recorded, and were probably some extemporaneous flashes suggested by the poetical pretensions of *Saunders*, who was then well advanced in years, and a kind of eccentric in his way. The lines of Burns, however, had the effect of rousing the ire of his contemporary ; and he retaliated in any thing but measured or complimentary language. Indeed, so grossly abusive and indecent are his verses—curious as they might be to many who have not seen the author’s volume—that

we do not feel warranted in quoting more than a few of the most unobjectionable. Burns and David Sillar were "bosom cronies" at the time alluded to; and it appears the latter had been also guilty of some poetical offence against the tailor. The first of the retaliatory pieces is entitled "Sillar and Tait; or, Tit for Tat"—

" My pipe wi' wind I maun gae fill 'er,
And play a tune to Davie Sillar ;"

and then the author goes on to describe some *indiscretions* with which David stood charged by the "feckless clash" of the neighbourhood, comparing him in these matters as a perfect equal to "braw Rab Burns." The village rhymster continues—

" Ye are twa ranting, rhyming billies,
The best colts that hae mounted fillies,
* * *

Search Greenock, Irvine, Ayr, or Killie's,
There's not your match.

Search Scotland all around by Lorn,
Next round by Leith and Abercorn,
Through a' Ayrshire, by the Sorn,
Tak' merry turns,
There's nane can soun' the *bawdy* horn
Like you and Burns.

My tumbling-cart I hae her shod,
I'll set her off upon the road,
My muse in't, she will sit and nod
Like auld Bell Ravey ;
The whole way unto her abode
She'll crack o' Davie.

She'll tell about the auld pea-stack,
How him and Susy was sae pack,
* * *

O, Davie, lad ! 'tis from my heart,
In Mr Wilson's was the part
Ye ca'd my muse a tumbling-cart,*
Gaun wantin' shoon ;
But I will mak' her try her art,
On you to croon."

Having thus repaid Davie for his compliment, he next directs his attack on Burns :—

“ Now I maun trace his pedigree
Because he made a sang on me.”

Under the titles of “ Burns in his Infancy,” “ Burns in Lochly,” “ Burns’s Hen clockin’ in Mauchline,” he accordingly endeavours to satirize the character of the Poet in a style at once scandalous and disgusting.

The specimen already afforded, we doubt not, sufficiently indicates the poetic character and rank of the author. His pieces would, in short, be intolerable but for their absurdity, and are only amusing from the local incidents to which they allude. Before adverting farther to the contents of his volume, however, it may not be improper to state the few particulars we have gleaned of the writer. He is generally understood to have been a native of Tarbolton, but from one of his songs, entitled “ The Author’s Nativity,” it is rather to be presumed that he was born somewhere in Peebles-shire :—

“ Leethen so pretty, †
Where first I drew breath,
There my mother Betty,
She clad me wi’ claith.

A shirt, coat, and vest,
Breeks, stockings, and shoon,
My hair neatly dress’d,
And a wee hat aboon.

Then from Dewar’s swair
I tripp’d on my shanks,
By pretty Traquair,
Up to Glendin’s banks.

* Tumbling, or coup-cart—a very rude species of machine, somewhat similar to the cars still in use in the less advanced districts of Ireland. They had wooden axletrees and wheels, most of them unshod, or bound with iron; and, being seldom greased, made a fearful grating noise.

† By Leethen, we presume he means the river Leithen, in the shire of Peebles. Probably the locality of his birth is the watering-place since well known as Innerleithen.

There sat I, and sang
 Upon yon green brow,
 The bonnie banks rang
 The music all through.

There the goshawks fly,
 In the banks they *cleck*,
 What language you'll cry,
 They'll repeat it *direct*."

But we have not space for farther quotation from this inimitable effusion; and shall therefore leave the goshawks to *cleck* undisturbed on Glendin's banks, while we endeavour to trace the subsequent career of the songster, with

His hair neatly dress'd,
 And a wee hat aboon.

Notwithstanding that he had thus given, like another Apollo, such early promise of melodious numbers, that

The bonnie banks rang
 The music all through,

the Fates it appears decreed that he should become a tailor, and, in lieu of Glendin's banks with its flowery sward, thenceforth take his seat on the board. Though born in a classic land, poor Saunders does not appear to have drunk deeply at the Helicon springs, which afterwards inspired a Scott and a Hogg. Indeed, his education seems to have been very limited; and it is probable that his rude "tumbling-cart" of a muse might have remained for ever silent but for the example of Burns.

Saunders found his way westward in the capacity of a pedlar; and as in those days mantua-making formed no inconsiderable branch of the business of a tailor, it was not unusual for him, on selling a gown-piece, to remain in the house of the fair purchaser until he had shaped and sewed it. Latterly, however, he laid aside the pack, and settled in the village of Tarbolton, where he became a well-known character, and is still remembered by not a few of the elderly inhabitants. He was a smart, active, sort of personage, with a great degree of vivacity in his smiling countenance; and, as he possessed an inexhaustible fund of anecdote and humour, he was the very life and soul of wedding, *rocking*, or

other merry-making parties. At the country fireside, he was always a welcome addition. Every body esteemed him; for, although his poetical license of lampooning sometimes created an enemy, no one cared to provoke his muse by manifesting their displeasure. All local squabbles, or any peculiar occurrence, found a ready chronicler in Saunders. Though regarded as somewhat of an eccentric, he had nevertheless considerable influence in the village, and took an active hand in every public movement. At the time the building of the Secession Church was in progress, to the erection of which the parish minister and neighbouring gentry were greatly opposed, the work was interrupted for the want of hewn stone. At a public meeting held to consider what should be done, he undertook to manage the affair by a plan which he said he had in his eye. The scheme was a very circuitous one, and nobody thought it would prove successful; nevertheless, he gained his object in a few days, and thereby established his reputation for superior sagacity.

With the view of augmenting the number of members, the Universal Friendly Society of Tarbolton used to have frequent processions. On these occasions there were generally two candidates for the Coloneley, and the one who produced most members became entitled to the honour. The canvass was usually keen. At one of the contested affairs of this kind, Sandy started in opposition to William Sillar, Spittleside, (brother of the poet, David,) and gained by a great majority. Our informant perfectly recollects the Poet with his cocked hat marching proudly through the village, at the head of the long train of members who followed. He was also Bailie of Tarbolton for some time—no mean proof of his respectability and character. In allusion to the various offices of trust and honour confided in him, he says in one of his poems—

“ I’m Patron to the Burgher folks,
 I’m Cornal to the Farmers’ Box,
 And Bailie to guid hearty cocks,
 That are a’ grand—
 Has heaps o’ houses built on rocks,
 Wi’ lime and sand.”

Saunders was at one period a man of property, having purchased

two or three houses in the village; but these he did not long retain, whether because he had not the means, or wished to realize a profit by the sale, it is impossible to say.

In 1794, when the late Earl of Eglinton, then Major Montgomerie, raised his regiment of West Lowland Fencibles, Saunders, though well advanced in years, was among the first, we believe, to enrol his name under the banners of the warlike Major. In "Kay's Edinburgh Portraits," where a portrait and a memoir of the Earl are given, the following notice of Tait, by way of a foot-note, is also appended:—"Among others who 'followed to the field' was an eccentric personage of the name of Tait. He was a tailor, and in stature somewhat beneath the military standard;* but he was a poet, and zealous in the cause of loyalty. He had sung the deeds of the Montgomeries in many a couplet; and, having animated the villagers with his loyal strains, resolved, like a second Tyrtæus, to encourage his companions in arms to victory by the fire and vigour of his verses.. It is said he could not write; nevertheless, he actually published a small volume of poems. These have long ago sunk into oblivion. Still 'Sawney Tait, the tailor,' is well remembered. He was a bachelor; and, like a true son of genius, occupied an attic of very small dimensions. At the 'June fair,' when the village was crowded, Saunders, by a tolerated infringement of the excise laws, annually converted his 'poet's corner' into a temple for the worship of Bacchus, and became publican in a small way. He was himself the presiding genius, and his apartment was always well frequented, especially by the younger portion of the country people, who were amused with his oddities. He sung with peculiar animation; and failed not to give due recitative effect to the more lengthy productions of his muse:—it might be in celebration of a bonspiel, in which the curlers of Tarbolton had been victorious over those of the parish of Stair—of a love-match—or such other local matter calculated to interest his rustic hearers, by whom his poems were highly applauded as being 'unco weel put thegither.' Some of his songs obtained a temporary popularity.

* Those who recollect him say that he was a stout, well-formed man, of middle stature.

One, in particular, on Mrs Alexander of Ballochmyle, was much talked of, probably from the circumstance of the lady having condescended to patronise the village laureate, by requesting his attendance at Ballochmyle, where he recited the piece—was rewarded—and afterwards continued to be a privileged frequenter of the hall. Poor Saunders, unluckily, was more in repute for his songs than his needle. He was, no doubt, uncommonly expeditious; in proof of which it is told that on some particular occasion he had made a coat in one day; but then his ‘stecks’ were prodigiously long, and with him fashion was out of the question, abiding as he always did by the ‘good old plan.’ The result was, that, while his brethren of the needle were paid eightpence a-day, Saunders acknowledged his inferiority, by claiming no more than sixpence! The military ardour of the Poet was somewhat evanescent. Whether the duties were too fatiguing, or whether his compatriots had no relish for poetical excitements, we know not; but true it is that, in the dusk of a summer evening, some few weeks after the departure of the Fencibles, Saunders was seen entering the village, leading a goat which he had procured in his travels, and followed by a band of youngsters, who had gone to meet him on his approach.”

Saunders published his volume in 1790. It was printed in Paisley, we believe, “for, and sold by the author only,” at the small charge of 1s. 6d., though containing upwards of 280 pages, octavo. The song in praise of Mrs Alexander of Ballochmyle is as follows. We give it verbatim, as any attempt at amendment would be fruitless:—

“THE LADY BALLOCHMYLE’S CHARIOT.

Tune—Jamie the Rover.

Miss Helen Maxwell, a young lady bright,*
 She was a match for Duke, Lord, or Knight,
 From bonnie Springkell she’s now ta’en her flight,
 And landed in Catrine Valley.

* The lady here celebrated is Helenora, wife of Claud Alexander, Esq. of Ballochmyle, daughter of Sir Alexander Maxwell of Springkell, and granddaughter of that Sir Michael Stewart who died in 1796. Ardgowan, in Renfrewshire, was her grandfather’s seat.

Her grandfather, knight, at Ardgowan doth dwell,
 And her father's the same, laird o' Springkell ;
 And she is lady in Catrine hersel',
 And she merrily trips thro' the Valley.

Alexander's trees they are tall and even,
 His lofty fine buildings topping nigh heav'n,
 There's pretty broad stairs, and up she runs scrivin,
 On the banks of Catrine Valley.

At the foot of the stairs if you sing or say,
 The pretty fine rooms like fiddles will play,
 For to welcome home their bright lady gay,
 From Springkell to Catrine Valley.

The first does sing treble, the fourth sings bass,
 The tenor always the counter does grace ;
 Then search all Ayrshire there's not such a place
 As the buildings in Catrine Valley.

They've as many een as the're days in the year ;
 And, when ye come nigh them, they pretty appear ;
 Our greatest Scotch gentry that hae much gear,
 Can never come up wi' the Valley.

There's pretty fine walks slides into the court,
 They twist and they twine, like a serpent about,
 And then at the top, three branches spread out
 That prettily lead thro' the Valley.

Then all around these fine shadowing bow'rs,
 Are pretty fine walks, and bonnie red flow'rs,
 With a gallant clock to tell them the hours,
 To be seen all on Catrine Valley.

The great Apollo when Daphne he saw,
 By the onc-half sure she was na sae braw,
 Lady Alexander did excel a'
 That was upon Enterkine Alley.

I saw her upon the top o' the stair,
 In gold links pretty was curl'd her hair ;
 She's bonnie, handsome, delightful, and fair,
 Helen Maxwell in Catrine Valley.

Miss Peggy by her, wi' een like a bead,
 Her brow it is brent, and her lips they are red,
 She excels the ladies on Tay or on Tweed,
 Miss Peggy on Catrine Valley.

There I saw the King stand at her left hand,
 And down he bow'd just at her command ;
 She's the prettiest lady in a' our land,
 Helen Maxwell in Catrine Valley.

The pinkies and flowers upon Catrine meads,
 When she goes by them, they a' nod their heads ;
 The bonnie wee nightingale peeps thro' the reeds,
 To see her trip over the Valley.

Her nature, her stature, and features so fine,
 Ye wad think her not human but divine,
 I will paint her picture, when I get time,
 Helen Maxwell in Catrine Valley.

She has a carriage they call a machine,
 The silver that's on't wad dazzle your een,
 To see her, and how they whirl so clean,
 Thro' the banks of sweet Catrine Valley.

The horse that was in't was a chestnut brown,
 The cleverest ever skipt thro' the town,
 When she is in, it rins pretty and soun',
 Thro' the banks of Catrine Valley.

Andrew Mitchel* drives as straight as a line ;
 The silver harnessing he makes to shine ;
 The hammer-claith under him bobs so fine,
 Upon sweet Catrine Valley.

The trimming about it is in three raw,
 Their livery is black and white velvet a' ;
 Sac fare ye weel, Catrine, I must awa',
 Down the banks on the side of the Valley."

The manner in which the "village laureate" had sung the deeds of the Montgomeries, may be gathered from the following:—

“ COL[IF]LSFIELD'S HAWKS AND GREYHOUNDS.

In imitation of Chevy-Chace.

Through Colsfield banks his hawks they fly,
 Cleek patricks in the air ;
 Below his hawks the greyhounds ply,
 And take kywart the hare.

* For many years coachman at Ballochmyle. He afterwards became a veterinary surgeon in Ayr, and long enjoyed very considerable practice.

There's Robison and Kennedy,
So nimbly scour the fells,
Of all the huntsmen bear the gree,
Their hawks still bear the bells.

Their feathers they keep in good trim,
Each in his proper place ;
Up thro' the skies you'll see them clim',
The woodcocks sweetly chace.

It is a pleasant sight to see,
Likewise a gallant match,
Thro' crystal skies so sweetly flee
The hawks the cock to catch.

The hawk comes up in a short space,
And kills the cock so free,
The vera way o' Chevy-chace,
Montgomerie slew Piercy.

Sir Hugh Montgomerie was his name,
His sword came clever knells,
He lost his life, that raised his fame,
Upon sweet Cheviot fells.

The English heads he gart them dance,
Thro' hundreds he did steer,
Thro' Earl Piercy he thrust at ounce
His gallant sharp stout spear.

His offspring yet they have the land
Of bonnie Skelmorlie,
Montgomerie's street's at their command,
And bowers five hundreds three.

When that great battle it was done,
Great Piercy's king did groan ;
The Scottish king thought it fine fun,
For Douglas made no moan.

England and Scotland's made a league,
They're just like man and wife,
If one cut off another's head,
For't he must lose his life.

So fare ye well, brave Skelmorlie,
Where heroes do resort,
Since Scotch and English they agree,
And play at rural sport."

In another set of verses—to the tune of “Peggy an’ ye die”—on the “Illumination of Tarbolton on the recovery of his Majesty” [George III.], the loyalty and liberality of Major Montgomerie are celebrated in the most lively style of the author:—

“ My voice I’ll raise and sing the praise
Of Hugh Montgomerie ;
May he hae mony merry days
In bonnie Skelmorlie.

He drums gart sound Tarbolton round,
His farmers to invite ;
His feuars they must all be found
Upon Montgomerie Street.

Our Provost, and the Bailies too,
Were in the finest trim,
And all the Conneil, in our view,
They were exceeding prim.

Our Council they went up the street,
The fiddles play’d so fine,
When them and Colsfield all did meet,
The town with lights did shine.

The drums did roar at Quintan’s door,
When the Cornal did appear,
And guns went off, below ten score,
And then gae him a cheer.

The town was hung with lights for that,
Just every street out through ;
And then a tun of rum we gat,
And drank till we were fu’.

Then Colsfield did begin the toasts,
Twa bowls where ships might swim ;
For it was him who bare the costs,
We all do him esteem.

The King and Queen, with merry glee,
Their health he drank them round,
And all the Royal family,
And then the drums did sound.

Likewise, at that he waved his hat,
Three cheers so loud and high,
The guns did crack so loud at that,
The squibs did upward fly.

And then the noble Prince of Wales,
 His health he round did toast,
 To banish Popery o' Versailles
 Quite from our British coast :

To gallant Pitt, long may he sit
 Our minister of state ;
 For if he die, or slip a fit,
 His match we'll never get :

To the land of cakes, and good beef-steaks—
 The farmers bear the gree,
 And them that fattest cattle makes,
 Wi' their industry.

When all these healths were drunk around,
 To dance we then did fa' ;
 That merry night therefore to crown,
 Till Colsfield went awa'.

The bells did ring, the fiddles sing,
 The de'il come stick the priest,
 Since hale and tight is George our King ;
 This is Montgomerie's jest.

He is our head, we are his feet,
 His lady she's the waist,
 His children they are mild and sweet,
 And modestly they're placed.

There's pretty plants in Colsfield banks,
 So pleasant to the view,
 The trees grow straightly on their *shanks*,
 You'll see as ye gang through.

With velvetaire, and walks so fair,
 Surrounded wi' a hem,
 Wi' gallant greyhounds for the hare,
 And hawks to take the game.

To his garden side I could you guide,
 There's a serpent walk so fine ;
 The peacocks sit in muckle pride,
 Their tails like Phœbus shine.

The lion he does watch his yard,
 The bear his pretty hall ;
 May He above them watch, the laird,
 Lady, and children all.

Mr Archibald he is gone abroad*
 Unto High Germany,
 Ye guardian angels, clear his road
 Safe home to his country.

Mr Roger he is for the seas,†
 O Eolus, calm tho squalls!
 And, Neptune, roll him curiously,
 Thro' large tempestuous gales.

The crows they fly high in the air,
 And make such pretty mirth;
 Few parts with Colsfield can compare,
 That's yet upon the earth.

There's the goldfinch, the linnet, and thrush,
 The blackbird skipping through,
 The warblers chant frae every bush,
 Farewell, Colsfield, adieu!"

The erection of the Catrine Cotton-Mills, commenced in 1786, was another matter of too much interest to escape the fertile and observant genius of Saunders:—

“ To the pretty lads buys our lairds estates,
 And wins their money in foreign parts;‡
 They make our tradesmen to rant and rair,
 And build cotton-mills on the banks o' Ayr.

There's Claud Alexander in Ballochmyle,
 May Providence upon him smile,
 And never let his purse run bare,
 While he's upon the banks o' Ayr.

Wi' Sir William Maxwell o' Springkell,
 And his pretty daughter none can excel;

* Archibald, afterwards Lord Montgomerie, attained the rank of Major-General, and died while abroad for his health in 1814. He married Lady Mary Montgomerie, eldest daughter of the eleventh Earl of Eglinton, by whom he had two sons, the eldest of whom is the present Earl of Eglinton. Lady Mary subsequently married Sir Charles Lamb, Bart. of Beauport.

† The Hon. Roger Montgomerie died at Port-Royal, Jamaica, in January 1799.

‡ The Poet here alludes to the purchase of Ballochmyle by the late Claud Alexander, Esq., from Sir John Whitefoord, whose embarrassments compelled him to part with the estate. The works were begun and carried on by Mr Alexander and the late David Dale, Esq., till 1801, when they were purchased by the present company, Messrs James Finlay & Co.

Her old son, now a boy so fair,
To Ballochmyle he is the heir.

His lady-mother from Craigen's place,
Of gentle blood, and of ancient race,
May her heart be merry and seldom sair,
While she's upon the banks o' Ayr.

Mr Allan from Lanark is head engineer;
He at one touch makes ten thousand steer,
Of spin'les and trin'les, jennies, like wire,
Ca'd wi' the water on the banks o' Ayr.

Gallant Claud he supplies our need,
And erects plans for our daily bread ;
O' his vast fortune he gies a share
To tradesmen upon the banks o' Ayr.

Wi' twenty guineas of ready clink,
Claud Alexander's health to drink,
To Mauchline all they did repair,
And drank his health on the banks o' Ayr.

In Mr Dove's they danced the night through,
Men, wives, lasses, and lads anew ;
So tight they tripped, pair and pair,
Upon the pleasant banks o' Ayr.

There's the linnet, nightingale, and lark,
At pretty Catrine e'er it be dark,
All sing so sweet wi' throats so clear,
They're sweet music-bells on the banks o' Ayr."

Thus have we devoted more space than we feel altogether justified in appropriating to the works of one so far below mediocrity as the Poet of Tarbolton ; yet, though rude and often laughably ridiculous, Saunders seems to have groped his way a little in Scottish history. He has a long ballad entitled the " Battle of the Largs," also verses on that of Loncartie, Dunkeld, Aberlemny, Roslin, &c., all of which display a pretty accurate knowledge of the leading circumstances connected with these important national events.

Though localized in Tarbolton, Saunders appears from his volume to have spent some time in Paisley. The following lines commemorate the " Burial of Lord Abercorn :"—

" Paisley High Kirk's like a temple,
 Craigans, Deuchal, Castle-temple,
 So tightly co'ert wi' slate ;
 The Abbey Kirk sounds like a horn,
 There buried is Lord Abercorn,
 Embalm'd he lies in state.
 In black coaches and horse were drest,
 So slowly did they ereep,
 Because their master's win to rest,
 And in the tomb must sleep.
 The saulies in rallies
 Did after other go ;
 Wi' sleepers and weepers
 It was a mournful show."

As this effusion relates to James sixth Earl of Abercorn, who died 9th October 1789, and was buried in the family sepulchre, (" the Sounding Aisle,") it may be regarded as in so far fixing the period of the Poet's sojourn in Paisley. A worthy septuagenarian (an ex-bailie) of that town, remembers " Sawney Tait" well. The Poet was, at the period alluded to, a journeyman tailor with one Daniel Mitchell, in John Street. The lads in the weaving-shop next door, having found out his rhyming propensities, were in the habit of challenging him to a trial of skill, and scraps of verses passed between them, greatly to the amusement of the weavers, who were obliged to admit that the Tailor's *goose* made the smoothest doggrel. As a sample of the interchange of rhyming ware, the Bailie recollects the following quatrain :—

" John Street is the King's nurserie,*
 Lonwell's the place where colours flee,
 Sandholes it is the place of trade,
 In Sanny Paton's shop or bed."

As Saunders continued in the employ of Mitchell† only

* This street was somewhat noted for the number of youth who enlisted.

† " Daunie" Mitchell was also from Tarbolton, and appears to have been as queer a fish as his journeyman. He had *routh* of droll stories and anecdotes, which his acquaintances could easily draw from him over a gill, when they wanted diversion. One of his stories would have made a capital " History" in the hands of Dugald Graham, and might have been entitled " The Wonderful Adventures of Daunie Mitchell,

about half a year, and is known to have returned immediately afterwards to Tarbolton, it is probable that his volume was in the press during this brief period—his economical habits having dictated the contrivance of working as a journeyman while the printing of his poems was in progress.

Our reminiscences of the Poet extend little farther. He was never married, and, as mentioned in the extract from *Kay's Portraits*, lived generally in a garret, without any companion whatever save a large tame rat, which invariably made its appearance at meal-time. One day a female came in when Saunders and his favourite were at dinner together. The rat, not accustomed to interruption, sprung up below the intruder's petticoat—she screamed for assistance—and, some of the neighbours rushing in, the rat was killed, much to the grief and wrath of the Poet. Among the many things for which the tailor was distinguished, we may mention his fondness for Pennystone playing. He once undertook a match with a flesher from Ayr, and beat him.

Saunders did not long survive his return from the Fencibles. Being ill, and finding his end approaching, he was taken to the house of William Wallace, Millburn, a short distance from the village, and died there towards the close of the century, about forty years ago.

Tailor,"—showing how that Daunie, in flying from a gauger, took refuge in a cooper's shade, where he hid himself in a barrel. How the cooper came and knocked on the head of the barrel, while Daunie lay within and durst not discover himself. How a bull came past, and, while rubbing himself against the barrel, was seized by Daunie by the tail through the bung-hole. How the bull roared and flang, and knocked Daunie and the barrel into the Water-of-Ayr. How Daunie stopped the bung-hole with his coat-tail, and went swimming down the water as far as the town of Ayr, when the folks on the river side, every one crying, "The barrel's mine—the barrel's mine!" drew the prize to land. How that, finding the barrel to contain something heavy, it was broken open, when out jumped Daunie, exclaiming—"The barrel's *yours!*—na, na, the barrel's *mine!*" and marched off with it in triumph, while the good folks of Ayr scampered away helter-skelter, believing him to be no other than the devil himself.

GAVIN DALZIEL,

AUTHOR OF "JOHN AND SAUNDERS, A PASTORAL ON THE DOWNFALL OF NAPOLEON," &c.

GAVIN DALZIEL, to whom James Fisher, the blind musician of Ochiltree, addresses a poetical epistle in his volume, published in 1792, was a native of the parish of Old Cumnock, and born, we should suppose from the advanced age at which he died, about the year 1764. In a poem inscribed to the Marquis of Bute, he says—

“ Near Lugar green banks on the braes of the Kyle,
My natal years pass'd there, nature did smile.”

His father was a weaver, to which occupation he also was brought up; but, being of a weakly constitution, he early abandoned the sedentary labour of the loom for the wandering life of a travelling chapman—a course more agreeable to his inclination, though exceedingly ill qualified for it in many other respects. His general appearance was that of a person in the last stage of consumption. His hair, of a sooty black, was combed back and bound behind with tape. From under his shaggy eyebrows two small grey eyes, set far back in their sockets, lighted up his lank and sallow visage, which was somewhat deformed by two large buck-teeth that projected over his under-lip, and marred the dissonant sounds of his screech-owl voice. His legs, nearly as small as drumsticks, were mounted on large feet, which he shuffled along seemingly with great difficulty. He was the “Rawhead-and-Bloodybones” of all the children in the district; but the gudewives and lasses were not averse to hear his old-fashioned clatter, and frequently purchased from him in preference to any other pedlar. The circuit of his traffic was generally confined to the upper part of Ayrshire; but he occasionally went to Glasgow to replenish his pack. On one luckless occasion, returning from that city to Ayrshire by Greenock,

with a pack in which all his wealth was concentrated, as he was carelessly sauntering along the quay, gazing at the number and beauty of the ships in the harbour, his mis-shapen feet came in such violent contact with a cable, as caused him to stumble head-long into the river. It was highwater at the time, and he would most certainly have been drowned but for the activity of a sailor, who, seizing a boat-hook, fixed it firmly in the pack of the unfortunate pedlar as he rose to the surface of the water, and thus held him up till rescued, by farther assistance, from his perilous situation. The salt water and the boat-hook rendered poor Gavin's muslins quite unsaleable, and consequently left him nearly penniless. He made this sad mishap the subject of a monody; and he has frequently been heard to say, that it was on this circumstance that Wilson, the author of "Wattie and Meg," founded his poem, entitled "The Loss of the Pack."

Some time after this, having got married, Gavin settled in the Newtown of Ayr as a teacher, but his school was attended only by a few children seemingly of the poorest class. Meg, his wife, apparently about his own age, was also a native of Cumnock. She tambered very industriously, and, having no children, they succeeded betwixt them in securing a scanty subsistence, though their earnings were often sadly curtailed by Gavin's visits to the change-house. In imitation of Burns, he often sung in praise of John Barleycorn, and his habits were so irregular, that his request to become a member of the Ayr St Paul's Lodge of Freemasons was not complied with.*

Soon after the rupture of the peace of Amiens, an Act was passed to raise a levy of 50,000 men to serve in the United Kingdom as an army of reserve. When on one of his rambles, Gavin happened to fall in with the agent of an Insurance Company, employed to procure substitutes for individuals balloted into the service, and by him, notwithstanding the uncouth ap-

* Mr Joseph Train, of whom we shall have occasion to speak in a subsequent memoir, was at this time Master of the Lodge, and it is worthy of notice that, in one year, he *entered, passed, and raised* upwards of seventy persons. Mr Train has yet in his possession a silver medal, presented to him by the members of Ayr St Paul's Lodge in 1806.

pearance of the Bard, was actually enlisted as a soldier of the 21st regiment.

Previous to his joining the army, Gavin invariably wore a suit of rusty black, evidently made for a more portly person. His hat was always drawn in, to fit the dimensions of his cranium, by the band being twisted round three or four pens, which served also to show the world that the wearer was a learned scribe. But the black coat was now replaced by a red jacket, and the beaver decorated with goose quills, by a white cloth cap, ornamented with large letters formed of red tape. Instead of a little dark dirty room, in the worst part of the town, he now occupied a portion of the spacious barracks of Ayr, situated on the margin of the sea. He had been, like other teachers, in the habit of chastising the dunces and truants of his little seminary; but, in the military school which he had just entered, he was treated as a dunce and a truant himself. Not being able to move with the agility required in the ranks at drill, he appeared always the most awkward person in the awkward squad; and when the rattan of the sergeant bended round his shoulders, he sighed for his little home and little school again.

As he could not be taught either to march or wheel, he was appointed schoolmaster to the corps; but it was soon found that he was as little fitted for this as for any other situation. His pupils, mostly grown up soldiers and recruits, were more inclined to laugh at his oddities than to profit by his instructions, and he entirely failed in maintaining that degree of authority essential to the due discharge of the preceptorial office. Poor Gavin was in consequence reduced to a pioneer, whose business it was to do all the dirty work required. The dress peculiar to soldiers in this capacity—his head nearly drowned in a bear-skin cap, as large as a beehive, with a brown leathern apron hanging down to his knees, and a goodly-sized axe and saw, in addition to his other accoutrements, slung on his back—rendered his appearance the most grotesque imaginable. Having transgressed the laws of sobriety, he was confined to the barracks for a certain time—obliged to wear his jacket turned inside out—and compelled, along with others in a similar situation, to draw a stone roller over the parade ground

several hours daily, as a punishment for the offence he had committed.

In this untoward dilemma, the Poet had recourse to his muse to help him out of his difficulties. He addressed a poem to Sir Frederick Adam, the commander of the military on that station, entitled "The Roller," in which the stone was supposed to express the feelings of the Poet on being placed in a situation so degrading, showing his physical inability to perform the work required, and praying that he might be relieved from such drudgery. This address had the desired effect. He was not only relieved from the labour of dragging the roller, but he was also discharged as being utterly unfit for service.

The poem which effected this unexpected change in the fortune of its author was immediately printed, and well received by the public of Ayrshire.* After celebrating his emancipation from bondage, as long as any part of the bounty lasted, Gavin once more became an active member of society. Having engaged with a company of booksellers in Glasgow to deliver works in the course of publication to subscribers in Ayrshire, he continued in this capacity for several years. He next became a hawker of tea, and was for some time so enthusiastic in religion, that he used to walk every Sunday from Ayr to Ochiltree, to hear the discourses of a dissenting clergyman.

From Ayr, Gavin latterly removed to Cumnoek, and was there resident in 1818, when he printed his little volume, or pamphlet, entitled "John and Saunders," with a variety of other pieces. These possess no manner of poetical merit, though superior to much of the trash to which the provincial press has given birth. The first, "a descriptive pastoral eclogue," as styled by the author, is a dialogue between two old farmers on the career and downfall of Napoleon. "Wattie and Willie, a Pastoral on the Death of Sir John Moore," is another of the leading pieces; but the only extractable specimen of Gavin's muse, is "The Days of Langsyne," written in a species of blank verse, descriptive of the scenes of his early days:—

* We have not a copy of this poem.

" Unpatronised an' poor, I artless sing
 My rustic tale, regardless of its fate,
 Though famed to be a tale of other times,
 Or doom'd to nameless dark obscurity.
 And whilst the Bard of fame attunes his song
 To visionary flights of fancied deeds,
 I sing the rural walks of youthful days,
 When sportive innocence adorned youth ;
 Far distant fled those days of festive mirth,
 When keen foreboding ills ne'er broke my rest,
 Nor 'midst the bustle of a scornful world,
 To drag out days in penury and toil.
 What's all the bustle of the busy throng—
 Though wealth increase, while with it anxious care,
 The sure companion of an active life ?
 As fate, with niggard hand, deals oft the lot
 Of minds adorn'd with all the marks of worth ;
 Thus brooding on the uneven hand of fate
 Doth sour the mind, and every object looks
 Asquint, and 's view'd as with a jaundiced eye.
 Let memory call to mind the days of youth,
 Spent on the plains or winding banks of Nith,*
 Or where some burnie's crystal purling streams,
 'Mang these sequester'd hills doth wind its course ;
 Or on the heath-clad hill to sport and play
 With the companions of my natal years,
 Of either sex, thrice happy, happy time !
 When young Alcander, dearest to my heart,
 (By all the ties that friendship ever knew,)
 Still led the van in every sportive play ;
 But oh, alas ! that friend, ere manhood came,
 In the deep briny flood doth find a tomb,
 And only lives in memory with those
 To whom his past endearments well were known.
 In raptures oft I recognise the time¹
 When shifting scenes, and variegated sport,
 Did charm the farmer's hall each winter eve,
 Where blooming fairest country nymphs, adorn'd
 With innocence and sweet attractive charms,
 Did nimbly ply the distaff till their task was o'er.
 There love's enchanting song did charm the ear,
 And soon, too soon, pass'd by the winter night.
 O happy, happy days ! though then unknown,
 Like those who at the fountain still may drink,
 Ne'er know the parching thirst in deserts wild ;

* The Nith takes its rise in Ayrshire.

Or, like the great, whose ever-rolling tide
 Bears out the ruthless grip of real ill,
 Though visionary ills oft spoil their rest.
 To pass the days and years of giddy youth,
 As fleet as transient thought, and even enjoy'd,
 Without e'er tasting their engaging sweets ;
 Yet pond'ring still the far-fled pleasing dreams,
 Of youthful happy day the varied scene,
 'Tween Nith's lone solitary winding streams
 To Glenmuir's pleasant shady groves and banks ;
 Or up yon glen, where all the feather'd throng
 In concert tune their clear melodious throats ;
 There oft beneath a pleasing arbour, form'd
 Of spreading beech, I've laid me down at noon ;
 Thus, on the flow'ry primrose bank reclined,
 List'ning these warblers chant their artless notes
 To love's enchanting sweet harmonic song ;
 Whilst that the fleecy charge, sprcad on the banks,
 Luxuriant fed on blooming pasture.
 There oft to cheer, and pass the summer eve,
 The shepherds did from neighb'ring hills convene,
 To try their feats of strength or nimble speed ;
 Till wearied, all with one consent sit down
 To tell of storied ghosts or Scottish wars,
 Of valiant, patriot WALLACE'S warlike arm,
 Who nobly stemm'd tyrannic Southern pride,
 Who thrice restored his native land from thrall ;
 Or of the valiant BRUCE, some deeds are told,
 At Bannockburn, against the English host,
 How's little band of Scots there bravely fought,
 And put to flight the huge unwieldy host
 Of Edward, England's king.
 On these banks stands an ancient Gothic tower,*
 Quite shapeless now, brow-beaten out with time ;
 But fame reports a king once reigned here,
 Yet when he lived, or when this castle fell,
 Record is silent ; yet the swain can tell
 Of mighty battles fought, and deeds of war,
 Herculean like, by this king's single arm.
 Such stories told, and strange they credit gain,
 'Mong swains of past and present times.
 Imagination still presents to view
 An ancient, aged, branchy, spreading thorn,

* The author here alludes, we presume, to the ruins of Turingzean Castle, situated on a small eminence not far from the banks of the Lugar. It once belonged to the Loudoun family.

That shades a hollow cliff, by nature form'd,
 Of solid rock, as if cut out by art ;
 Within this seat, once sacred unto love,
 I've often sat until the morning dawn
 With young Maria, telling tales of love.
 O thou, Maria ! fresher than the rose,
 Whose breath was like the bloom of early spring ;
 But now no more thy name 'mong swains is heard,
 But like a flower nipt up in early bloom,
 Thou silent sleep'st in the cold arms of death.
 O Death, thou ravisher of human-kind !
 When will thy avaricious jaws be full ?
 Can dotard age, nor lame decrepitude,
 Suffice, and spare the budding rose of youth ?
 But Death's lank sides are never full, nor doth
 He spare what comes within his boundless grasp.
 O pleasing thought, the bygone days of youth !
 Though keen's the dart that often wounds the peace
 Of the young swain, when disappointed love,
 Or losing of a friend, whose kindred souls
 Knew only one grand point—the good of both.
 Ah ! changed indeed this once delighted scene,
 To dark and direful melancholy gloom,
 Or gathering storms, of cross and adverse fate.
 Though often that some faint sunbeams of hope,
 Do dart athwart the darken'd hemisphere,
 To paint us happy at some distant day ;
 But when the summit oft we have attain'd,
 Some fresh obstructions in succession rise ;
 And so successive on till tottering age,
 Or dreaded Death awake his fancied dream
 To look at scenes that vary not nor change ;
 While thus reflection broods, my mind afloat
 Stops short—her fancied tour on Glenmuir banks,
 And all my dream of youth comes just to this,
 That age is fast approaching, and that youth
 Is gone, ah ! never, never to return !'

The following letter, addressed, shortly after the publication of his poems, to one who had been a friend and patron to him in former years, has been put into our hands. It is characteristic of the author, and may not be uninteresting :—

Cumnock, June 5, 1819.

MR J——— T——,

Much respected Friend,—I have just availed myself of this opportunity to send you two-three lines of a scrawl, as a memento that such a one occupies a small part of

the university of space, and is still struggling almost friendless amidst a hustling crowd of discontented beings, like myself, contending with wayward Fate, attended by three steady companions—accumulated debility, increasing age, and the Poet's constant attendant, Poverty; yet, 'midst all these jarring companions, were you here you might see me hirpling, hobbling, up the hill Parnasus. But, indeed, I may compare myself to the mares of Auchmanoch, (who drew on to age but never to wit,) a country laird in the parish of Sorn. I published a few of my pieces last year; some of them you have seen in manuscript. I send you a copy. I have a number of them on hand. Yet all my chief friends (and part of yours) about Ayr, sleep in death—Wallace Park and Wilson; with my much valued friend Alexander Wilson; with poor Craw,* who was obliged to leave his beloved Jess, with all her bewitching allurements, for the cold, clay-cold grasp of death.

Dear Friend,—I would write often when in a writing mood, had I an opportunity of conveyance, although at the present I never could have been found in a worse tune for writing or even thinking, owing to a violent gale which bloweth straight as usual in my face. I would take it kind if you would let me have a few lines, giving me something new or eccentric. Let me know if you have any hopes of farther preferment than an officer of a district. Give my compliments to Mrs T—— and family. You will have an opportunity to write me with the bearer hereof. My dear Sir, I remain yours, &c.

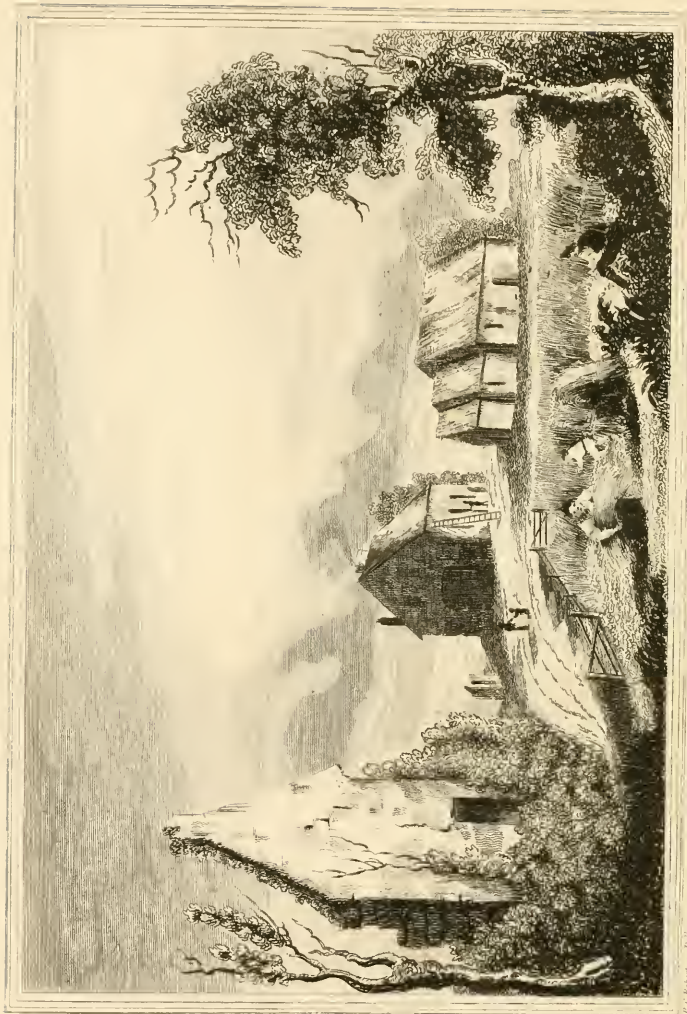
GAVIN DALZIEL."

The gale of adversity continued to blow straight in the face of poor Gavin, we believe, until the last. His own habits, no doubt, contributed to heighten the untowardness of his fate. The fit of sobriety and religion with which he was seized prior to leaving Ayr, does not seem to have been of long continuance. He was often met afterwards in a state of inebriety by his friends; yet, though most of them were inclined to eschew his company, while they laughed at his foibles and eccentricities, he was generally respected as a warm-hearted, kind, inoffensive person. Poor Gavin died some years ago, considerably in advance of seventy years of age. The following lines by a lady, on a more recent occasion, apply aptly to the Bard of Cumnock:—

" Alas! each hour but shows me more the poet's fatal doom,
Writ in misfortune's clouded page, though radiance may illumine
The chequer'd path he treads. Awhile sorrow and cankering care,
Coil'd like a worm within the bud, are ever hidden there;
And such a fate, alas! was thine enthusiastic Bard;
And such will be to thousands more the child of song's reward."

* Craw was a versifier of some notoriety in Ayrshire, having published more than one small volume of pieces. He was not a native of the county, nor even, we believe, of the country.

THE
MORE RECENT POETS.



W. Halliday del.

KNOCKNIARLOCH.

J. C. Robertson sculp.

JOHN BURTT.

AMONG the Poets who have appeared in Ayrshire since the days of Burns, there are few whose writings are so worthy of the name of poetical compositions as those of Burtt. His pieces, it is true, are not numerous, but they are interesting and pathetic, and cannot fail to inspire the reader with the noblest sentiments, or to awaken into action the finer and more amiable feelings of his nature.

JOHN BURTT was born about the year 1790, at Knockmarloch, in the parish of Riccarton, and within a mile of the little village of Kirkdyke, or Craigie, in Ayrshire. His father was coachman to Major Brown, proprietor of Knockmarloch, who, soon after the above-mentioned date, sold the estate and went to France. The father of our Poet then removed to Port-Glasgow, and young Burtt was left to the care of his grandfather, who lived at Scargie, a small farm near the seat of Treesbanks in the same parish. In this rural and retired situation, however, Burtt did not long reside; for, when he was only about six years of age, his grandfather removed with him from Scargie to Kilmarnock. The education he received at this early period of his life must have been very limited, as he was soon sent to a woollen manufactory, where he laboured about two years in the humble capacity of a "piecer." He then learned the art of weaving, and, having served the term of his apprenticeship faithfully, continued to work some time afterwards as a journeyman. While at the loom, he devoted almost all his leisure hours to miscellaneous reading, and acquired some knowledge of the Latin and French languages.

In March 1807, when sixteen years of age, he went to Greenock, and unfortunately fell into the hands of the Gourock fishermen,

who at that time had to procure some men for the ships of war, in order to save themselves from service. They immediately put him on board the *Tender*; and thus was poor Burtt doomed to suffer, or at least to witness, the cruel and barbarous treatment that many of our British seamen experienced during the war; and which, in one of his pieces, entitled "The Sailor's Fate," he so vividly and feelingly describes.

At what period of life he began to record his thoughts in writing, we have not been informed; but, from a letter written on board the *Magnificent* (the ship in which he served) it appears that at that time, when amid the stormy waves of the pathless ocean, he evinced a taste for poetical composition. In commemoration of a convivial meeting, held by himself and other Scotchmen in the vessel, on the first morning of the year 1810, he produced some spirited verses in the Scottish dialect:—

" All hail ! thou new-born year o' Ten,
 Wi' a' my heart thou'rt welcome ben :
 Wad thou but better fortune sen'
 Than did thy Dad,
 And set me on my hills again,
 I'd be richt glad.
 * * *
 Then come, my neibours, ane an' a',
 Against our fates nae langer thraw;
 Nor let nae meddling griefs ava
 Disturb our cheer ;
 Here's wishing them that's far awa'
 A gude new-year !"

After about five years service on board the *Magnificent*, Burtt obtained leave to visit his friends and the scenes of his boyhood. He did so, but never returned to the navy. He again began to work at his trade in Kilmarnock; but finding it uncongenial to his taste, he at length opened a school, which was soon crowded with pupils—a proof that he was deemed well qualified

—————" To rear the tender thought—
 To teach the young idea how to shoot—
 To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind—
 To breathe the enlivening spirit; and to fix
 The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

Those who enjoyed his society and friendship at this time, speak of him with profound respect, as one whose knowledge of literature and general subjects was very considerable; whose heart was generous and open; and whose habits were strictly moral, and praiseworthy in the highest degree.

In 1816, he published a small poetical volume of considerable merit, entitled "Horæ Poeticæ; or the Recreation of a Leisure Hour," which procured him many admirers, not more for the poetical merit it discovered, than for the noble sentiments and virtuous feelings to which it gave utterance. This little volume is before us, and, in glancing over its pages, we feel the utmost difficulty in making a selection. Each of the larger pieces is introduced with observations in prose, written in a strain of burning eloquence, such as might well be mistaken for the composition of a Burke, or an Erskine. We quote the following, not perhaps the best specimen, but the most suitable for our purpose. It is entitled

" ELIZA'S TOMB.

" [I wish I could say that the circumstance on which the subsequent lines are founded, owed its creation to Fancy and not to Fact. Alas! it is not a tale of imaginary sorrow which claims your sympathy; nor an ideal tomb that asks the tribute of your tears. Tenderness for the living, and respect for the departed, forbid me to mention names; but a few particulars may not be unacceptable—may even be gratifying.

About seven years ago, Eliza was the pride of her village, (a considerable one in Ayrshire,) and was beheld with esteem and admiration by many a sincere, affectionate, and undesigning youth. Unlike those who are vain of beauty (the most transient of nature's gifts) she sought not to engage, and disappoint their love. On the truth and affection of ONE she relied with confidence, and looked up to him as her guardian genius, the friend of her welfare, the solace of every sorrow, and the partner of all her joys. In a too unguarded moment—and what frail child of mortality can

boast of being ever watchful?—in a too unguarded moment of endearing hope, and mistrustless faith, she yielded to the solicitations of the polished barbarian, who, under the mask of love—who, under the anticipated name of husband—softened her heart, hushed her timidity, and deprived her at once of honour and of peace. Here fell the structure of her promised happiness. The eye which had hitherto glistened with apparent kindness, was now averted with indifference. The tongue that had soothed her ears with vows of perpetual regard, was now silent or morose. The hand to which Hope had taught her to look for shelter and support, was now withdrawn. Where she sought consolation, she found incivility—where she expected sympathy, she met with scorn. He who caused, refused to mitigate her grief. He who tempted and betrayed her, now abandoned her to all the misery of her hapless fate. Hapless, indeed! Overcome by a sense of her own disgrace, and the corroding thought of her destroyer's unfeeling faithfulness, her heart broke; and the cold and 'narrow house' of death became the dwelling of the young—the beautiful Eliza!

If it be possible that these pages should ever meet the eye of a betrayer of innocence, O that I could borrow the alarming accents of Heaven's loudest thunder, to speak terror to his guilty soul! I would bid him be ashamed of the depravity of his heart—would make him tremble at the extent, and be astonished at the consequence, of his crime. I would drive him to the wretched mansion, the painful couch, or the early grave of fallen virtue, to shed the tear of horror and contrition over the victim whose misplaced affection for him had proved her greatest guilt and heaviest punishment. Does the reader smile at my warmth? Let him blush! If not for his own conduct, let him blush for the baseness of his fallen nature; and lament that the corruption of our social manners allows one human being to betray the innocence, and blast the happiness, of another, with impunity.

He who, under the smile of complacency, the artful counterfeit of fond attention, the well-feigned guise of attachment,

and the seemingly sincere protestations of perpetual love, can flatter, insinuate, delude, destroy—is a monster so odious, that language is not possessed of an epithet sufficiently reproachful, to distinguish him from the common herd of villains. Yet, strange! while a pitiless world hoots the blushing, grieved, less-guilty female into cheerless solitude, there to pine in secret anguish, unpitied, unconsolated, till the merciful hand of death conceal her from its scorn—her destroyer is not banished from society, is not shunned by the reputedly virtuous, is even respected in the round of fashion, and caressed in the circles of the gay! If such be the discrimination and justice of the world; if such the inhuman indifference and insipid honour of the fashionable; and if such the negative innocence and dubious virtue of the volatile—I hope the reader will not hesitate to join me in the indignant language of the dying patriarch—‘O my soul! come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!’]

“ The starless heaven affords no beam
 To light me through the gloom,
 To where the dark-green nettle bends
 On fair Eliza’s tomb.
 The thrush sits mutely in its tree,
 Where erst it sang so mellow;
 And sleep, to all the world—but me,
 Has spread his magic pillow.
 Peace to thy shade,
 Ill-fated maid!
 And happy be thy rest;
 And still be seen
 Unfading green
 The turf upon thy breast.

Night’s solemn, melancholy gloom
 Will vanish to the morn;
 But to the tenant of the tomb
 No dawn shall e’er return!
 False man! by what insidious art
 Didst thou succeed to wile her?
 How could thy base, inhuman heart
 Thus pitiless beguile her?

Or, villain ! say
 Didst thou betray
 Because she loved too well ?
 Did not her love
 Thy guilt reprove,
 And make thy bosom—hell ?

Her smile was sweet as opening dawn,
 Didst thou that smile o'ercast ?
 No flower so fair bloom'd on the lawn,
 Didst thou that blossom blast ?
 Then still to love mayst thou be prone,
 But none that love return thee !
 No heart a kindred feeling own !
 No maid that will not spurn thee !
 Then shalt thou tread,
 With aching head,
 The solitary grove ;
 Then shalt thou feel
 That reckless ill,
 A hopeless, hapless love !

Soft rest thy ashes, ruin'd maid !
 And at each rising morn,
 The warblers stooping from their shade,
 Will deck thy grass-bound urn :
 With pious care will strew the ground,
 With leaves pluck'd from the willow,
 Which droops in silence, where the sun
 First gilds the Irwin's billow.
 Then shouldst thou come
 To view the tomb,
 Which pity thus hath drest ;
 Their notes of woe
 Will softly flow,
 And soothe thy sprite to rest."

Besides the little volume from which the foregoing is copied, Burtt was the author of several fugitive pieces, some of which found their way into a collection of songs published some years since in Glasgow, under the title of "The Encyclopædia of Song." One of these is the following :—

" O'ER THE MIST-SHROUDED CLIFFS.

TUNE—*Banks of the Devon.*

O'er the mist-shrouded cliffs of the low mountain straying,
 Where the wild winds of winter incessantly rave ;

What woes wring my heart while intently surveying
 The storm's gloomy path on the breast of the wave ?
 Ye foam-crested billows allow me to wail,
 Ere ye toss me afar from my loved native shore ;
 Where the flow'r which bloom'd sweetest in Coila's green vale,
 The pride of my bosom, my Mary's no more !

No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll wander,
 And smile at the moon's rippled face in the wave !
 No more shall my arms cling with fondness around her,
 For the dewdrops of morning fall cold on her grave !
 No more shall the soft thrill of love warm my breast ;
 I haste with the storm to a far distant shore,
 Where unknown, unlamented, my ashes shall rest,
 And joy shall revisit my bosom no more !"

We quote the above chiefly with the view of explaining its history. In *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, these verses are given as an original effusion of Burns ; but the truth is, they are the production of Burtt. In a note, it is stated by the Messrs Chambers that this song was " *First* published in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* of Nov. 21, 1829, being taken from a manuscript in the possession of Mr Lewis Smith, bookseller, Aberdeen." Now, the fact is, the verses were published, *with Burtt's name attached to them*, in a song-book, printed at Kilmarnock, in 1821, *seven* years previously. The original manuscript was given by the author to the publisher, Mr Mathie, who sent it to a provincial newspaper (*The Air Advertiser* probably) with the signature " *BURNS*" subscribed to it ; and from this paper the manuscript in Mr Smith's possession was most likely copied. Mr Mathie, perceiving that the song had every chance of becoming a popular one, inserted it afterwards in the small collection above mentioned, as the production of Burtt, to whose other lyrics it bears a very striking affinity. But there is another circumstance still farther corroborative of the above statement, which will appear as we proceed with the narrative of the author.

In the " *Spirit of British Song*," edited by John Goldie, and published in 1826, we find the following rather humorous ditty ascribed to Burtt. It is in a style and spirit entirely different from the usual sentimental tone of his muse :—

"ADVICE TO THE LASSES.

To onie tune ye like.

Lasses lookna sourly meek,
 But laugh an' love in youth's gay morn ;
 If once the bloom forsake your cheek,
 Fareweel your heuks, the hairst is shorn.

The secret favour that you meet,
 Or the favour ye return.
 If vainly ye let ithers sec't,
 Fareweel your heuks, the hairst is shorn.

Wi' care the tender moments grip,
 When your cautious lovers burn ;
 But if ye let that moment slip,
 Fareweel your heuks, the hairst is shorn.

Be on your guard wi' *Sir* or *Laird*—
 A' ties but that o' marriage spurn ;
 For if you grant what he may want,
 Fareweel your heuks, your hairst is shorn.

The lad that's wi' your siller ta'en,
 Rejeet his vows wi' honest scorn ;
 For ance the glitterin' ore's his ain,
 Fareweel your heuks, the hairst is shorn.

Widows rest ye as ye are,
 Nae lover now dare erook his horn ;
 But mak' him master o' your gear,
 Fareweel your heuks, the hairst is shorn.

Lasses that nae lads hae got,
 But live in garrets lane and lorn,
 Let ilk be carefu' o' her cat—
 Ne'er think o' heuks, your hairst is shorn."

In 1816, soon after the publication of his little volume, Burt proceeded to Paisley, leaving a poetical friend and associate in possession of the school he had left behind him in Kilmarnock. In Paisley he remained about a twelvemonth, following his former profession of teacher ; but he does not appear to have met with the encouragement he expected, and, drawn by the natural enthusiasm of his feelings into a pretty active participation in the political excitement of that period, he was induced to think of

quitting his native country for America. Breathing a last adieu to his friends and the land of his birth, he accordingly embarked at Greenock for the United States of America, in the summer of 1817. On this occasion, the words of his beautiful little poem "FAREWELL," must have burst from his lips :—

" Farewell, sweet angel ! still more dear
Than labour'd eloquence can tell :
The throbbing heart—the bursting tear,
Express my woe to bid—Farewell !

A sad regret—a lingering thought,
Will on past transports fondly dwell ;
Each eye I meet, with kindness fraught,
Will wound the heart that bleeds—Farewell !

I go—but oft thy passing form
Will meet me on the ocean's swell :
And fancy hear amid the storm
Each foam-topp'd billow shriek—Farewell !

There is a pang which ne'er will cease ;
A word that will for ever knell :—
The pang of perish'd happiness—
The agonizing word—Farewell !

When dreary o'er my oozy tomb
The spirit of the deep shall yell ;
The friend that closed my eyes will come,
And give my latest-breathed—Farewell !

O, shall no thrill of former joy—
No recollection e'er rebel !
And urge a grief-extorted sigh,
For him that wish'd, in death—Farewell !"

In America, Burtt again became a schoolmaster, and taught for some time. When about two years in his adopted land, he ventured on bringing out a small 18mo edition of poetical pieces, bearing the title of "Transient Murmurs of a Solitary Lyre ; consisting of Poems and Songs in English and Scotch." This little book, which we have found much pleasure in perusing, was printed at Bridgeton, U. S., in 1819. *Among other songs is the one formerly quoted as having been attributed to Burns*—a circumstance which completely subverts the account given of it by the Messrs Chambers, and fully establishes, we should think,

the claim of Burtt to the authorship. The volume contains many simple and truly poetical effusions. The following we give at random :—

“ ON A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS KILLED BY A FALL FROM THE
MAIN-YARD OF A BRITISH SEVENTY-FOUR, 1813.

Rest, ill-starr'd youth ! those dreams of joy are fled
Which woo'd thy fancy to thy storm-lash'd shore :
No dawn shall rouse thee from thy gloomy bed,
And Nith's green banks shall cheer thy eyes no more.

No more the moon, half-hid in misty shroud,
Shall light thy footsteps to thy Jenny's door ;
She, watching, sees but autumn's sleety cloud,
And nothing hears, save ocean's ceaseless roar.

What though no marble grace thy nameless tomb,
And beckon friendship *there* to shed her tear ;
My heart shall occupy the marble's room,
And weeping friendship pay her tribute *here*.

Rest, hapless youth ! thy dream of life is o'er ;
And when my weary round of care shall cease,
O, meet my spirit on thy unknown shore,
And give me welcome to thy home of peace !”

“ SONG.

Dark is the night—the wintry blast
Sings through the leafless thorn ;
The setting moon, far in the west,
Half shows her waning horn :
But, lassie, dearest to my heart,
In spite of wind or rain,
We'll blythely meet and blythely part,
And blythely meet again.

What though the wintry tempest pour
Its fury o'er the lea !
My Mary's hut will shade the show'r,
And turn the blast frae me.
Then, lassie, dearest to my heart,
In spite of wind or rain,
We'll blythely meet and blythely part,
And blythely meet again.

What though no star with friendly beam
Look through the murky sky !

What though no torch's ardent gleam
 Direct me where to fly !
 Steer'd by the impulse of my heart,
 In spite of wind and rain,
 We'll blythely meet and blythely part,
 And blythely meet again."

Along with the other virtues, love of country seems to have strongly animated the bosom of Burt. About the time he went to America, the people of Scotland were meeting in thousands to petition the Legislature for a redress of grievances, and, as formerly stated, the philanthropic feelings of our author led him to take part in the political movement. In a note to one of the poems in his American volume, he alludes to the proceedings of that period, and concisely, yet powerfully, portrays his own eventful history. "The reader will notice," says he, "in the perusal of these pieces, frequent allusions to misfortunes, the remembrance of which can only give interest to the heart which they wrung almost to bursting—to the feelings they strained almost to madness. I shall only remark, by way of explanation, that from his childish years the author was inspired with a reverence for virtue, a love of learning, and a thirst for glory, bordering on romance—nay, altogether romantic; that in the midst of his hopes, when he imagined that something like the dawning of genius shed an inspiring radiance on his soul, at the age of sixteen, he was snatched from every earthly hope and comfort, and immured for five tedious years in a British ship of war; that in this enthrallment, which, without any probable limit besides that of his life, was a death-blow to all his expectations, his spirits sunk—the faculties of his mind became dormant—and the energies of his formerly warm affections were swallowed up in a chilling detestation of mankind, and a weary gloom of dark forebodings and unceasing melancholy; that, having made his escape from bondage, he returned to the scenes of his happier days, where he hoped to rebuild the ruined structure of his mind—redeem in some measure his past losses—and realize that humble serenity and social felicity he had so often anticipated in the bosom of friendship and love. But before the sombre traces of his former sorrows were erased, he saw his country plunged into unprecedented

wretchedness by the narrow-minded policy, and shameless selfishness, and intolerable arrogance of a faction which, having mounted the chariot of legislation, drove it over the necks of a hopeless, misrepresented, injured people: that, having done all his feeble powers were equal to, and that his conscience approved, in conjunction with his compatriots, finding his liberty endangered, and unable any longer to witness miseries he could not ameliorate, and to which he himself would probably fall a victim, he sought the shores of America—he sought the asylum of freedom—and the society of freemen.”

Nothing probably can ever compensate for the loss of country and the society of early friends, more especially to minds constituted like that of the amiable and enthusiastic subject of our brief memoir; but if good fortune and honour, in the land of their adoption, can at all pour the balm of conciliation into the wounded spirit of the expatriated, we are happy to say that Burt has not been without the reward due to genius and to meritorious exertion. Still animated by that “love of learning” which had characterized his juvenile years, he prosecuted his studies at Princeton College, New Jersey, became a licentiate of the Presbyterian Church, and was soon afterwards appointed to a charge at Salem. From thence, in January 1831, he went to Philadelphia, where he was elected unanimously by the Presbyterian ministers and elders of that city to the editorship of a newspaper entitled “The Presbyterian.” In 1833, he proceeded to Cincinnati, to conduct a religious paper called “The Standard.” He was also minister of a small Presbyterian Church in that place; and was there honoured with a call, in August 1835, to the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in a Theological Seminary, or Hall of Divinity, as it would be denominated in Scotland.

JOHN KENNEDY.

JOHN KENNEDY, author of "Fancy's Tour with the Genius of Cruelty, and other Poems," and of a prose production, entitled "Geordie Chalmers, or the Law in Glenbuckie," was born in Kilmarnock on the 3d of October 1789. His parents, who were in a humble sphere of life, but of honest industrious habits, gave him such an education as the working people of Scotland generally bestow on their children; namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

After leaving school, he was taught the art of weaving by his father, who also wrought at that vocation. It soon became apparent, however, from young Kennedy's superior powers of mind, which were early developed, that he was naturally fitted for something more elevated than the drudgery of the loom; and of this he probably was conscious, as his chief ambition in his early years, we are told, was to obtain such a degree of scholastic knowledge as might qualify him for one of the learned professions. But his father deemed it improper to encourage him in his desires, or was prevented, perhaps, from so doing by his limited circumstances; and the young Poet was under the necessity of remaining at the loom, with little hope of ever receiving that polite and classical education for which he ardently thirsted. By an eager application to books, however, he acquired, in the early part of his life, a considerable share of general information, and devoted no small portion of his leisure hours to the study of poetical and prose composition.

Having a strong aversion to the trade of weaving, and seeing no way by which he could raise himself above it, he, in the year 1807, when about the age of eighteen, enlisted as a substitute in the Royal Ayrshire Militia, and received as a bounty the sum of thirty pounds sterling. With that corps he served honourably in Scotland, England, and Ireland, for about eight years, during which period his knowledge of mankind became considerably enlarged; and, though surrounded with the bustle and glare of

military life, yet he contrived to devote, as formerly, a part of his time to the cultivation of his mind, and to the study of poetry, which was now perhaps his only source of rational enjoyment. Alluding to this period in an epistle to a correspondent, he somewhat humorously enumerates the various obstacles which sometimes interrupted him in his poetic contemplations :—

“ O weel I hae min’ o’ the times she* wad flatter,
 O’ ance, when sair dung, poor, afflicted, an’ cross’d,
 I sat down to write thee a skreed o’ a letter,
 When the drum beat to arms, and the letter was lost !
 * * * * *

Another time, as I was smoking my cutty,
 I faun the muse had my auld knapper-case fired ;
 But, as she began to be eanty an’ witty,
 Sly Harry cam’ in, an’ the jingle expired !

An’ weel I remember ae cauld winter gloamin’,
 When *watching* auld Ned, as he guzzled his grog ;
 I took out my keel, dreading evil frae no man,
 When the corporal seized me as ye wad a dog !

An’ ance when for duty, I faun mysel’ musing,
 My quill gaed to wark, an’ completed a stave ;
 But I’d better been absent wi’ tinklers carousing,
 For they sent me to drill for neglecting to shave !”
 * * * * *

From these reflections, and many others scattered throughout his writings, a soldier’s life, it would appear, was not so congenial to him as he probably imagined it would be when he entered the service. He was naturally of an independent mind, and a lover of freedom and of justice ; and, consequently, must have frequently felt with the utmost indignation the petty tyranny of those who, though his superiors in rank, were, in all likelihood, infinitely beneath him in judgment and intelligence. Besides, the system of flogging, so repugnant to the feelings of humanity, was at that time too prevalent in the army ; and, to one of his susceptibility of heart, it must have been painful in the extreme to witness the flesh of his fellow-soldiers mangled and lacerated by the lash, for some trifling offence scarcely worthy of a name.

* The Muse.

At the general peace in 1815, Kennedy, along with others, received his discharge; and judging from the following sonnet, composed on the occasion, he appears to have felt delighted on being emancipated from a line of life so completely inimical to those principles of liberty which he so highly cherished. The sonnet, in our opinion, shows that the mind of its author was lightened with a ray of the diviner flame; in short, it is a fine little effusion, "stamped," as Campbell would express it, "in the mintage of sovereign genius:"—

“ The bliss that poets feel when all-inspired,
 They tune the lyre to love’s bewitching theme—
 The joy that warriors know when glory-fired,
 They snatch the laurels of immortal fame—
 May give some faint resemblance of the joy
 That thrill’d my soul that memorable day;
 When something more than rapture fill’d my eye,
 And something more than glory sent a ray,
 Dispelling the long-gather’d midnight gloom,
 Dark as the bosom of the vaulted tomb;
 When ’fore my eyes stood heaven-born Liberty
 In all the glow of Eden’s virgin bloom,
 And with an angel’s voice thus said to me,
 ‘ Go! breathe thy native air—this mandate makes thee free.’ ”

Mr Kennedy now returned to Kilmarnock, and again supported himself by working at the loom. About this time he acquired the Latin language; and, as in former years, took every opportunity of adding to his stock of knowledge by reading, and by intercourse with a few literary associates, among whom was the ingenious Burt—a sketch of whose life we have just given. Burt was then teaching in Kilmarnock; and, being about to leave that place for Paisley, Kennedy became his successor. He now found more leisure for study and reflection, while at the same time he evinced much zeal and industry in the discharge of his important duties as an instructor of the young.

In 1816, he was induced, from a spirit of patriotism, to take a part in political matters. On the 7th day of December of that year, a public meeting was held at Dean Park, near Kilmarnock, for the purpose of deliberating on the best method of remedying the distresses of the country. At that meeting Kennedy de-

livered an address—the subject of which was military flogging—in which he depicted with great animation, and in striking language, the miseries which the poor soldier was compelled to suffer by that degrading system of punishment.* In the course of a year or two after the above meeting was held, it will be recollected that individuals, calling themselves reformers, recommended to the people in the west of Scotland the propriety of forcing from the Government, by physical means, that political freedom which they despaired of obtaining by petitioning. But Kennedy, though always an earnest advocate of genuine reform, strongly disapproved of recourse to unconstitutional methods, and consequently kept himself apart from the society of those who were most active in the movement. It would appear, however, that the eye of suspicion was fixed upon him after his appearance on the Dean Park hustings; for, although he performed almost no part in the political proceedings of 1819, yet he did not altogether escape suffering, as will be seen from his subsequent history.

About that time he was preparing for publication, by subscription, his first poetical volume, and had occasion to communicate with several acquaintances at a distance, by way of procuring subscribers for the work. Among those with whom he corresponded was a person of the name of Logan, residing in Ayr, who had served along with him in the militia. Logan was warmly attached to, and somewhat actively engaged in, the cause of radicalism. A letter which he had written and transmitted to a body of delegates, assembled in Glasgow, was detected, and considered as seditious. His house was immediately searched by the authori-

* At the Dean Park meeting a well-written speech or paper, composed by Burt, who was then in Paisley, was also read. The speech of Mr Alexander M'Laren, a talented and respectable tradesman, who opened the proceedings, was thought to be seditious and inflammatory. He was therefore tried for sedition at Edinburgh, on the 5th and 7th March of the following year, and, being found guilty, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Mr Thomas Baird, a very respectable merchant, who did not speak at the meeting, but having been appointed by a committee to superintend the publication of a pamphlet containing the various addresses delivered on the occasion, was likewise, along with Mr M'Laren, tried for the same offence; and, being also found guilty, received as a punishment the same period of imprisonment. They had besides to find caution for their good behaviour for the space of three years; the former under a penalty of forty pounds, and the latter under a penalty of two hundred pounds sterling.

ties, in the expectation of discovering other documents connected with the movement, and a number of letters were found, among which were several written by Kennedy. They were fortunately, however, all of a literary character, except one that related to a meeting about to take place in Wallacetown, in which our author earnestly cautioned his friend to conduct himself wisely and legally, concluding with the emphatic words—“*Remember the Dean Park!*” But though nothing of a criminal nature was observed in his letters, still fortune seemed determined, as it were, to look upon poor Kennedy with a threatening aspect. Among the papers found in the possession of Logan, were two signed with the fictitious signature of “*Stradone,*” which were reckoned in a high degree seditious or treasonable. It was considered by the Sheriff that these letters might be the production of Kennedy. Orders were therefore given to the magistrates of Kilmarnock to search his house, which they did with the greatest care, but no writings of an illegal description were discovered, nor could any clue be found leading to a knowledge of the author of the letters in question. Many manuscripts, however, were taken away by the magistrates, and despatched to Ayr for the inspection of the Sheriff. Among others was the first sketch of the history of “*Geordie Chalmers,*” which was published about that time in a periodical work entitled the “*Kilmarnock Mirror;*” but the Sheriff, no doubt finding that *Geordie* was an imaginary and not a real character, returned it again to the author. Meantime Kennedy was apprehended, and sent to Ayr for examination. Logan was also apprehended, but earnestly asserted his ignorance of the source from which the letters had emanated, adding that, from the style of the penmanship, he was sure they were not the performance of Kennedy. At his examination before the Sheriff, Kennedy declared in the most solemn manner that he was not the author of the letters signed “*Stradone,*” nor could any proof be procured to testify to the contrary. He now naturally expected to be set at liberty, but was told that he must give *bail* for his future appearance. In a letter to his brother, Mr William Kennedy, he thus describes the state of his feelings on that unfortunate occasion :—“ I now fairly expected

to be relieved ; but Geordie Chalmers wasna born to be sae easily dealt wi'. They telt me I bit to stay a nicht or twa, and gie bail. When I heard this I cou'd a flown through the roof." In the same letter—dated Sabbath morning, the 27th February 1820—he says, " If brought to the bar of my country to answer for sedition, I shall not flinch, with the help of my God—the God and patron of liberty, of love, of justice, of time, and eternity—of virtue and every thing that is noble, and great, and resplendently glorious, and good ; I shall face my judges and jurors, and most assuredly plead my own cause. But I trust it will not come to this. I am only grieved for my friends. Perhaps I am in my element. I am at any rate far from being downhearted. I quite forget that this is the Sabbath morning. Peace be to us all ! Keep up your hearts. I know not whether I should give bail till once I know my crime."

On the Monday following his father and brother went to Ayr, and, under a bond of sixty pounds, became security for his appearance when required. Kennedy was now liberated, and fondly trusted he would be troubled no more with the matter ; but it was yet his fate to feel the malignant influence of similar misfortunes. The first of April 1820—as is well known—was fixed on by the Radicals as the day on which they should muster in arms against the Government of the country ; but, as might have been expected, the scheme, which folly had so thoughtlessly devised, proved altogether abortive. The Government, however, were determined to make examples of those who had acted a principal part in the affair ; and, for the purpose of securing such persons, a considerable number of infantry and cavalry, with one piece of cannon, were introduced into Kilmarnock early on the morning of the 14th of the above month, before the inhabitants were awake. Several persons, who were considered to be *leading characters*, were taken from their homes and committed to prison ; and Kennedy, who had so lately been in imprisonment, was once more apprehended, and conveyed, under a strong escort of cavalry, to the county jail. He again underwent a strict examination, but nothing of a seditious or treasonable nature having been found against him, he was liberated after enduring nineteen days and

nights of close confinement. Though upheld by an entire consciousness of his innocence with regard to every imputation, his sensitive and independent spirit felt most intensely under the deprivation of liberty, and the ignominious treatment to which he had been subjected. Indeed, he often afterwards remarked upon the severe laceration his feelings underwent at this period; and it was one of those events in his short life, that left an indelible impression upon his mind. The solitude of his cell, however, was in some degree sweetened by the pursuit of his favourite studies. The following little poem, composed by our author while in prison, will, we doubt not, be perused with pleasure:—

“ THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

What cheers the pilgrim on his way
To the land of darkness and decay,
When his eyes are dim, and locks are gray?
The hope of immortality.

What gives the patriot joy, when borne
By adverse fate, by anguish torn;
When all around him droops forlorn?
The hope of immortality.

What fills the minstrel with delight
When his lyre is broke, and death's dark night
Appears; when fancy takes her flight?
The hope of immortality.

Say ye who know the soldier's fate;
His woes, and pains, and perils great;
What makes him die with soul elate?
The hope of immortality.

What soothes the prisoner in his cell,
When sorrows keen his bosom swell,
As friends have ta'en the long farewell?
The hope of immortality.

Call it not vain to answer here,
When death dissolves the union dear;
What is't that dries the lover's tear?
The hope of immortality.

What makes the parent o'er his child
Bend with resignation mild,
When the lips are closed that lately smiled?
The hope of immortality.

What gives to friendship such a charm,
 And makes the bosom beat so warm,
 And quiets every dread alarm?
 The hope of immortality.

Come, then, O glorious end to cares!
 And come my friends without your fears!
 Come plighted love, without your tears,
 And welcome immortality!"

In June 1820, Mr Kennedy obtained the situation of teacher at Chapel Green, near Kilsyth; and, immediately after his settlement there, he married Miss Janet Houston, a young woman of an amiable disposition, and endowed with superior mental accomplishments. The sea of life, on which he had hitherto been the sport, as it were, of adverse storms, began to assume a somewhat more serene and agreeable aspect; for it may be said, if ever he enjoyed in the whole course of his existence any thing like real happiness, it was during his residence at Chapel Green. Prior to this period of his life, he had written and published two volumes of miscellaneous poetry; but though they contained many pieces remarkable for strength of thought and vigour of expression, yet they brought him little or no profit, nor did they extend in any great degree the fame of their author. Perseverance, however, was fortunately a prominent feature of his character; for, notwithstanding his want of success, he still continued to travel on in the path of literature, wooing occasionally the Muse, and producing many little pieces which found their way into the provincial periodicals of the day. Alluding to his first volumes, he himself says—"though his early aspirations did not raise him into fame, he at least, from those provincial papers which noticed him, received such a reception as induced him to hold on his way."

In 1826, he again published a poetical volume under the title of "Fancy's Tour with the Genius of Cruelty, and other Poems." This publication, which is dedicated with permission to Sir Archibald Edmonstone, Bart. of Duntreath,* is composed of selections from his former writings, together with some of the later produc-

* Author of a "Journey to the Passes in Upper Egypt."

tions of his pen. In perusing the volume, we feel somewhat surprised that it is not more extensively known. The poetry is by no means of a commonplace description. On the contrary, it is frequently powerful and elevated, and displays on the part of the author an intimate knowledge of human nature, and a genuineness of feeling, not always to be found in the works of more celebrated writers. In short, the poetical excellence of many of the pieces, and the noble spirit of patriotism, religion, and morality, which glows in almost every page, entitle the author, we should think, to a more respectable position among the bards of his country, than has yet been assigned him.

Did our limits permit, we might gratify the reader with numerous selections. The following is from "Thoughts on the Millennium"—a poem distinguished by ease and sweetness, and breathing in many instances the pathos and piety of Pollok:—

“ But, hark ! the song is rising on the gale,
 And, lo ! they come, the worshippers of heaven,
 Adown yon mountain's side ; where martyrs sang,
 Maugre the powers of hell, the strains of Zion ;
 Each with his sword and Bible, doubly arm'd,
 And rear'd for us a stately fabric fair ;
 Each goodly stone, the beauty of the Lord !
 How solemnly they move the hill along,
 Filling the air with melody, that plays
 Like the sweet airs upon the ear, which Eve
 And her great sinless lord heard at the close
 Of earth's first week ; when music knew no jar,
 And every leaf stirr'd at the sound of praise.
 Ennobled band ! grace flows from lip to lip !
 The smile of love is their's ! The hand of friendship
 And the eye of faith bespeaks a brotherhood
 Alike in aim ! No higher they aspire
 Than heaven—no lower they would be ! Choice friends !
 Wrapt in eternity's almighty King ;
 And free as the breeze that wafts their song of love
 From hill to grove, green bank and flowery lea ;
 They come ; and, as they tread the hallow'd ground,
 The mountain flowers as eager to be press'd
 Exuberant spring, and kiss the passing foot !
 The rivulets, gliding o'er the pebble, sing,
 Receiving from the overhanging bough

The falling numbers of the thrush, which, mellow'd
 By the zephyr's sighing note, an olio forms
 Of 'trancing music, ravishing the soul !
 And as they swell the strain, the woodlands peal
 A double carol, and the skylark pours
 Her variations sweet from yonder cloud,
 From which the spirits of our noble sires,
 Who braved the rack and flame for Scotia's weal,
 Look down well pleased ; even Sol well pleased
 Smiles from his car, and sheds a brighter beam.
 They come, they come, and every eye is full ;
 And every heart feels the sublime impulse
 Of inspiration o'er the hymn of love !
 Methinks the bless'd above are near with harps
 With which they raise the melodies of heaven !
 Blow, ye sweet breezes ! how I love to hear
 The symphonies borne on your softening wings—
 'Tis all enchantment ! antepast of bliss !”

The poem entitled “ The Champion,” is also full of choice thoughts. The address to Caledonia, with which it concludes, exhibits in an admirable light the patriotic and benevolent feelings of the Poet :—

“ O, Caledonia, first and best of lands !
 O'er whom bright knowledge reigns and worth presides.
 My country ! to whom thy God has given
 The rich endowment and the generous gift !
 Hear the request of one whose weal is thine.
 If thou art well and stored with goodly things,
 Thy rights secure, and all thy statutes mild ;
 Think on the horrors of the eastern clime !
 When call'd by chime of Sabbath-bell to hear
 The words of truth, simplicity, and love,
 Think on those lands where Sabbath-bell is not !
 If call'd to witness the departing scene—
 To close the eyes of some dear relative—
 To mingle in the group that bears along
 A wife—a husband—to the lowly tomb ;
 Think on the Ganges—on the pile—the grave,
 Where life embraces death ! When sitting warm,
 Your soul illumined, and heart charm'd with strain
 Of noble Tillotson and classic Dwight ;
 Think on the pilgrim starving by the way—
 On Mecca think. Bear with me still !
 When rises in thy mind the generous thought,
 And thou would'st add thy mite to swell the list

Of kind benevolence ; do not forget
 The tiger-worshippers in Afric wild !
 Scotia ! my native land ! for whom my soul
 Burns, or alone, or in the crowd, by day
 Or night ; let not thy prudence shut thine eyes
 On the poor Pagan world where horror reigns !
 Think on thy fathers ! on thine ancient priests,
 Wishart, and Mills the grand, and all the brave
 Who bled in battle, or on scaffold died,
 That thou might'st be a queen ! On them but think.
 And when thou sittest in the sanctuary ;
 Or in thy palace, or thy cot, secure
 From violation, as in castle strong ;
 Or when a-field thou skimm'st the dowy grass,
 Fearing no danger from the woods around ;
 Let not proud selfishness engross thy mind,
 But cast an eye to Negro-land, and say—
 ' O that mine arm could break thy chain ;
 That thou wert free, enlighten'd ; that thy lot
 Were mine ; that thou had'st had a Knox, a Shields,
 A Wood, a Hamilton, a chief like old Argyle !'
 And O, my country ! when thou think'st on these,
 Let all thy soul within thee rise in love
 And gratitude to Him, who made thee great,
 Who gave thee knowledge, peace, and honour grand ;
 Endearments social, pleasures rich and rare,
 And Liberty, the noblest gift of heaven !"

In the following extract from the poem "On Maternal Love," a mother's affection for her child in the hour of sickness, is faithfully portrayed :—

" And in the sickly hour, when all is sad,
 No rest. Some fever drinking up the strength,
 And pain convulsive ravaging within—
 Then is the hour of keen solicitude !
 Then is the eye suffused with pearly love !
 Then is the soul of tenderness display'd !
 O, could the muse describe the touching scene,
 The time of yearning heart, of exquisite
 Desire for but one hour of calm repose ;
 Or represent the joy that beams at sight
 Of health returning to the pallid cheek ;
 Or tell the feelings of her soul that sends
 An orison to heaven, embalm'd with tears
 Of gratitude, at death's averted blow !"

In the concluding stanzas of the piece entitled "Puzzled for Matter," our author thus powerfully expresses his admiration of the poet Cowper:—

“ And where, O sterile muse! where is the man
 That sang the sofa?—Cowper! where is he?
 Immortal bard!—to bliss celestial gone!—
 I'll ask no more—for truth is found in thee:

For thine's the strain that tampers not with guile;
 For thine's the muse that stoops not for applause;
 For thine's the satire that unmasks the vile;
 The heart that burns in fair religion's cause;

And thine's the humour of so chaste a kind,
 As ne'er to offend the most fastidious ear;
 In thee the patriot and the man we find,
 The poet and the christian—all that's dear.

Thou art the poet of humanity;
 The bard all moral, all for public weal;
 No place hast thou for piping low profanity,
 The curse of poetry. Thou dost not steal

From stream polluted with ignoble lays,
 The scum of low lasciviousness, and dip
 Thy pen in ink all slander, and then praise
 The goddess of detraction. On thy lip

Sits purity. The strains thy soul declare
 Pure as the fire of heaven, and bright as Love,
 Gliding up through the circumambient air
 To greet chaste Liberty, from realm above,

Descending in a car of light to meet
 Her sister fair! Thou art the freeman's theme;
 The slave's best argument; a store replete
 With noble maxims—worth immortal fame.

Yes, Cowper, when old Time has pass'd away,
 And men have changed their forms 'beyond the bourne,'
 Angels shall warble o'er each freeborn lay,
 And bless the name of Cowper in their turn.”

* * * *

The poem "On the Death of the Author's Son," contains some beautiful verses. How truly he describes the fleeting nature of human hopes and happiness!

“ But vain are our hopes, and as transient our joys ;
 The worm preys within, and the sweet blossom dies ;
 The tear trickles down on the bosom of snow,
 To prove that no charm is exempted from woe !

The dark clouds arise with the sun in the morn ;
 By the lily upspringeth the thistle and thorn ;
 Like the glance of a star is felicity here !
 The smile only flits to make room for the tear.

And man is a dreamer—and life is a dream ;
 And the dream is a snow-flake engulf'd in a stream !
 And time is that stream rolling on to the main
 Of eternity ; ne'er to roll past us again !”

From “ *Fancy's Tour*,” the “ *Parting of Elijah and Elisha*,” and from “ *The Confession*,” some animated extracts might be given. The following lines, descriptive of a madman's dream, are taken from the latter production :—

“ To dream !—ay !—but his dream was dread,
 The pillow started from under his head,
 The howl of demons around him rung,
 O'er the shoreless gulf of despair he hung.

* * * *

He offer'd to flee—his feet stuck in the clay,
 And his tongue grew stiff as he tried to pray ;
 To draw in defence was vain, for the hand
 Stood clench'd, and the power of self-command
 Died in his soul, like a gleam of light
 In the womb of a dark and moonless night.”

We will conclude our selections by quoting entire the poem “ *Auld Age*,” and the song “ *O, who for his country and rights would not die !*” We never peruse the former (and we have often done so) without being pleased with the lessons of wisdom it inculcates ; and the latter never ceases to delight us with its bold patriotic melody :—

“ AULD AGE.

Auld age cam' eroichlin' up the gate,
 Puir, wither'd, thiu, an' bare ;
 As I gae'd spankin' down in state,
 Braw, bloomin', fresh, an' fair ;

Naething caring for the sage,
Till ance he said to me ;
O, stop young man an' crack awee
Wi' puir auld age !

I ance was bloomin' like thysel',
O' care an' sorrow free ;
'Mang a' the youngsters buir the bell,
Nane were a match for me ;
Aft caper'd on life's flowery stage,
As frolicsome as thee,
An' never thocht the dregs to prec
O' puir auld age !

O, ay, man, aften I hae been
Far, far ayont the sun,
An' mony a thousan' I hae seen
Laid laigh aneath the grun' ;
Aft hae I stood the battlo's rage
At hame and owre the sea,
An' never thocht to live an' drce
Wi' puir auld age !

Thae auld gray locks ye see o' mine,
Were sleeket ance an' fair,
An' this auld pow was ance, like thine,
Weel theecket owre wi' hair ;
I needed na then a staff to gauge
My steps, as now you see ;
O man, tak' warnin', think on me,
An' puir auld age !

An' dinna sport braw youth awa',
But seek where honour lies,
An' keep the precepts o' the law
That bids us a' be wise ;
An' min' what mony a hoary sage
Has often said to me,
O, dinna unprovided be
For puir auld age !

If e'er ye reach the vale o' care
Whare a' disorder seems,
An' fin's braw hope has ta'en the air
Wi' a' her gowden dreams ;
Ye'll maybe think upon the sage,
Wha stood an' said to thee,
O, dinna a' your duty lea'e
To puir auld age !

An', O, my bairn, be na sweet
 To part wi' earthly fame ;
 For gruesome Death, O be na feert !
 He'll only sen' you hame ;
 He'll only lowse you out the cage,
 Your better part set free,
 An' save you frae the misery
 O' puir auld age !

Nae man can tell whan he's to dec,
 Or what is to bofa' ;
 But them frae care wha soonest flee
 Are happiest o' a'.
 They fin' nae angry passlons rage,
 Nae pain, nor poverty ;
 Nor stoit about alanc like me,
 Wi' puir auld age !

But maybe ye'll think ye've lang to live,
 Maist that ye'll never fail,
 An' never owre misfortunes grieve,
 At disappointments wail ;
 But read the auld philosophic page
 Which nature wrote for thee,
 An' then I'll lay ye'll think awee
 On puir auld age !

Do ye see twa stumps* across the way,
 Ance trees stout, fresh, an' green,
 Wi' blackbirds chanting on ilk spray
 Their sangs at morn an' e'en ;
 See naething there now to engage
 Young Fancy's glowing e'e,
 Except to them wha think like me
 On puir auld age !

Man, aften when I'm stopping by,
 Chance on a sunny day,
 I think I could fa' too an' cry,
 To see them stumpet sae :
 To see the effects o' winter's rage,
 O' time an' destiny,
 An' what's to happen unto me
 In puir auld age ?

* Alluding to the twin trees that grew at the head of Titchfield Street, Kilmarnock, lately cut down, having served their day and generation.

But no to taigle you, my son,
 Remember ye maun dee,
 An' never do as I hae done,
 Lea'e a' to se'enty-three ;
 But tell the warld in a page
 O' simple poetry,
 Ance i' the day to think awee
 On puir auld age !"

" SONG.

O, WHO FOR HIS COUNTRY AND RIGHTS WOULD NOT DIE ?

AIR—*Our Prince's Day.*

Deep in yon wood, where the mistletoe clings to
 The old lyart monarch of forest and grove ;
 Where the wide spreading ash-tree, by time silver'd, brings to
 Remembrance the days when our forefathers strove ;
 When Druid would fight with black demon by night,
 As the Genius of Liberty frown'd from the sky,
 And Ignorance reign'd, by grim Bigotry chain'd
 To the car of the despot. One evening I wander'd
 With the lyre, all my solace, its music to try ;
 When a wild strain arose as on freedom I ponder'd,
 ' O, who for his country and rights would not die ?'

The music was sweet, and the language inspiring,
 Oft heard in dread hour by the minstrel of Coil ;
 And him* who the sons of poor Erin is firing
 With love, that would kiss every inch of their soil.
 Entranced at the sound, I fell to the ground,
 Tear gush'd after tear, and deep sigh follow'd sigh,
 When a light bright as day, round the spot where I lay,
 Stream'd from heaven—'twas a beam from the genius of Freedom,
 In kindling emotions, that flash'd in my eye ;
 A band next appear'd, and the music that led 'em,
 Was—' who for his country and rights would not die ?'

I knew the bright host by their mantles of glory,
 The laurels that twined, and the crowns that they wore,
 To be those who blaze in the annals of story,
 Who fought for their liberties panting in gore.
 O ! well could I tell how they fought, where they fell,
 'Gainst whom they had struggled, disdainng to fly ;
 Each prize they had won, for the deeds they had done

* Moore.

In the cause of humanity—still chain'd and bleeding
 To the oar—at the car—few regarding her cry.
 Again the strain burst, as I saw them receding,
 ' O, who for his country and rights would not die ?'

O ye, in whose bosoms your birthrights are planted,
 Whose names are revered in the councils above ;
 O leave not your stations, your efforts are wanted,
 Till slavery expire on the altar of love !
 Till freedom explore every country and shore,
 Where the ensigns of darkness and tyranny fly,
 And the noble and brave become free as the wave
 That ripples amongst the green breast of the ocean,
 Refresh'd by the zephyrs, illumed by the sky,
 And glory reward those who, danger opposing,
 Step forward to save their dear country or die !"

Among the poems of Kennedy are many other pieces similar, if not superior in merit, to those we have extracted. " In the composition of them," as a critic on his poetry has justly remarked, " he has evidently suited himself to the various tastes and capacities of his readers. Hence he is at one time light and amusing, and at another serious and instructive ; sometimes dignified and cautious, at other times fearlessly boisterous and rapid. In one poem we are pleased with a mellow sweetness, and in another with a wild abruptness ; in one he describes the march of intelligence, peace, and joy, and in another the superstitious forebodings of an old woman, each in language and numbers admirably characteristic. In one piece he suits his stanzas to the feelings of the pious young lady whom he addresses, and in another he echoes the awkwardness of the old bachelor by the stiffness and terseness of the numbers in which his character is described."

Some time after the publication of the volume above noticed, Kennedy spent such intervals as he could snatch from his professional labours in extending and preparing for the press the best of all his literary performances, viz. " Geordie Chalmers, or the Law in Glenbuckie ;" but before the manuscript had been long in the hands of the compositor, the health of the author became considerably impaired ; and, as the correction of the proofs entirely devolved upon himself, the progress of the publication was somewhat interrupted. The work, however, though slowly, drew

towards a conclusion ; but, alas ! its talented author, who had infused into its pages the spirit of genius, was destined to sleep the sleep of death before it had assumed the form of a volume ; for on the day succeeding that on which he had examined and corrected the concluding proof-sheet, (the last thing we believe which he did upon earth,) his illness became more alarming, and continued to increase for four days, when death terminated his sufferings on the 4th of October 1833.

Besides a widow, he left three children (the youngest only three weeks old) to mourn his premature death. He had just completed his forty-fourth year, thirteen of which he passed at Chapel Green, among a people by whom he was much esteemed for his moral and intellectual worth, and by whom his death was deeply regretted. His remains were interred in the burying-ground of Kilsyth.

As a man, Mr Kennedy possessed many splendid virtues. The various workings of the human heart he had studied with attention, and was well acquainted with literature and with the history of his own and other countries ; consequently, his mind was enriched with the best reflections of the wisest of mankind, which he always used to advantage, and which rendered his conversation altogether instructive and interesting. When seated in the social circle, his lively disposition, his playful humour, and the flashes of his satirical wit, strongly bespoke his superiority of intellect, and inspired, with a fascinating delight, the bosoms of those who had the pleasure of enjoying his society.

As his works will suggest, Mr Kennedy's life did not partake much of the nature of the placid stream that flows along, knowing nothing but gentle ripples. It might be seen sometimes, indeed, progressing in calmness and peace, though more frequently it partook of the perturbation and dash of the mountain torrent. But though the cruelties of selfishness and oppression, and the miseries of humanity, were often too vividly before his view, and robbed him of repose, yet the warmth of his affection and the ardour of his hope sweetened his cup of life, and gave him a just relish of human existence ; while his bold imagination, even in his last distressful hours, continued to cherish its bright

visions, in his own beautiful words, " amongst the hills of immortality."

The length of the preceding sketch almost prevents us from devoting any space to Mr Kennedy's posthumous publication, entitled " Geordie Chalmers." We would not, however, be doing justice to the memory of the author, were we to pass over in silence the best of all his productions. It is the history of a humble and obscure teacher, who experienced in his professional career many sickening trials and heart-rending disappointments. The scenes through which he passed—the miseries he endured—and the various characters, amiable and unamiable, in whose society he had occasion to mingle, from the morning on which he departed from his native Thornybrae till the day he was starved out of Glenbuekie, are all accurately and admirably delineated; and no man, we believe, whose heart is actuated by proper feelings, could read this interesting work without deriving from the perusal the highest gratification—a gratification, in short, which genius alone can impart. " We cannot but regret," says an able critic, " the premature death of Mr Kennedy. Had he lived, he might have done for Scotland what the author of ' Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry,' has done for Ireland. He writes with much vigour. * * * * The character of Luggiehead is not unworthy of Cervantes. Indeed, it is a younger brother of honest Sancho's—not so amusing, because more shrewd and sensible. Luggiehead is an admirable conception. It is a portrait of a fine character done to the very life. We have seen him, and shaken hands with him somewhere. We have had a dram out of his bottle; or, at all events, he has filled a gill to us in his own ' Public.' His admiration of honour and honesty, is as sincere as is his contempt for what he calls ' English tricks and Eerish blarney.'"

The following brief extract, descriptive of a " tea-handlin'," we give as a specimen of the author's humour:—

" The tea was immediately got ready, not in the style of your modern *tele-a-tele* gentry, but in a way eminently calculated to appease the cravings of one whose light dinner left room for something more than a paring of cheese and a slate biscuit. Ham, heaped on a broth plate, sent forth its odoriferous flavour from the centre of the table;

a swanking Dunlop cheese, as if newly rolled in by the three wise men of Gotham, stood at the Bailie's foot ready for dissection; a large roll of butter occupied a prominent place among the dishes; and mountains of bere scones and oaten cakes, giving stability to the whole establishment, brought to our hero's remembrance the days at Thornybrae, when his father, according to the custom of his ancestors, gathered all his children around him on a New-year's morning, and blessed them with the best in the house.

"It was a tea in reality, and called forth the following observations from his peculiar friend, Luggiehead:—

"'Tca, Mr Chalmers, is unco gude, when there's something unco gude till't; but tea without something substantial to sook up the water, an' line ane's ribs, is a mere sporting wi' ane's inside. Fair play, dominie! Nane o' yer snip-snap, clishy-clashy palavers for me. Tither ouk we were a' owre at Mr Braidfit's, at the tap o' the knowe owre by; but sair I rued that I didna tak' a *chack* afore I left hame, for sic anither humbug was never played on hungry humanity. There were several leddies o' fashion frae the south kintra present, an' sae, sir, to please their gentle stamachs, they starved the rest. Here's the way they gaed to wark. First, we were a' shown into the parlour. Niest we sat doon on chairs placed a mile an' a half frae the table. Then Mrs Braidfit tak's her seat in front o' the tray, saying, 'Leddies, can ye tak' sugar an' cream? An'ra, I needna speer at you.' Then fillin' the cups about halfway, up starts Miss Jean wi' a cup an' saucer in ilka haun, an' after her marches wee Tam wi' a server containin' a wheen thin shaves o' laif bread, cut through the middle. Then roun' the company they go, and stap a dish in ilka ane's haun, an' a shave o' bread an' butter no the size o' the Jack o' diamonds. Then 'Mak' your tea o't!' says the laird. Then aff rows my cup aff the saucer, an' spoils a' my plush breeks, smashing itsel' to pieces at my fit. Then the leddies curl their brows, an' won'er what I'm made o'. 'Auld stoit!' whispers Mrs Braidfit: but recollecting that she was awn me a trifle, she changes her tune, and says, 'Eh! pity me, Mr Luggiehead, what's the matter wi' ye noo? Jenny—hoy, Jenny, bring a tooel here as fast as ye can: bring a cup an' saucer wi' ye too: haste ye—fey haste ye, my leddy.' Then, after I had gotten my senses back, roun' they cam' again wi' anither cup, an' a cracker no the size o' yer thoom-nail. An' that being dunc, the shine was owre,—the leddies a' seemingly as pleased as if they had gotten lads to convoy them hame frae the kirk. But may I ride on the win' wi' auld Nance Logan, the witch o' Glenteerie, when I gang to siccan a peelly-wally concern again! A tea! Gin I couldna eaten the hale hypothec in ae minute, my name's no Luggiehead! But it seems to be an improvement! Sae be't. Gude gear pleases the merchant. But, Bailie, gin his improvements in teaching be like our improvements in tea-drinking, than see your dochters under his tuition, I'd rather see him an' them rowin' doon the Warlock Burn on the tap o' a Lammas flood! But mind yoursel', dominie; seek nae biddin': mind yer in a friend's hoose; an' dinna forget the gude auld sayin', that what's hained aff the stamach's ill vaired on the back; or, in ither words, that the stintin' o' the body never yet showed a generous sowl.'"

JAMES THOMSON.

JAMES THOMSON, the subject of this brief memoir, was born in Kilmarnock on the 9th day of May 1775. His father was a tanner in that town, in circumstances somewhat affluent; for, besides other property, he was proprietor of the large Tan-work in which he carried on his business, and which was reckoned at the time, and is still, perhaps, one of the most convenient and well-designed in Britain. It is now in the possession of James Crooks, Esq.

Intended by his parents for the ministry, young Thomson received, in his earlier years, as liberal an education as could be given him at the schools of his native town; and, when about the age of fourteen, he went to College, where he studied for nine seasons. He was then licensed to preach the gospel, and soon after obtained a call from a congregation of Burghers in Mid-Calder; but his parents, thinking that his health was likely to be impaired by his ministerial duties, made many objections to his accepting of the call with which he had been honoured, and suggested to him the propriety of serving one year's apprenticeship at the trade of his father, and of becoming a partner with him in his business. This he did, and gave up all thoughts of following the clerical profession.

Soon after he engaged in business, he married Helen Bruce, a young lady with whom he became acquainted during the years he attended College, and who was governess in the family of Mungo Fairlie, Esq. of Holmes. She was possessed of little or no fortune, but in personal attractions and graces of mind, she was superior to the generality of her sex. To him she bore five children. It was not his lot, however, to enjoy her society for a very lengthened period; for, while she was yet in the prime of life, she was seized with an illness which occasioned her dissolution. The anguish he felt on being thus prematurely bereaved of the object of his early affection is expressed in one of his poems, en-

titled "Helen in the Grave;" and in after life, when brooding over the past, he thus speaks of her in another production:—

"Wife of my youth! thy grave is green,
No noxious weed nor nettle seen;
Pure as the flower among the heath,
So once wast thou that lies beneath.

* * *

As o'er thy grave I trembling bend
Heav'n knows the pangs my bosom rend."

In the year 1803 or 1804, when Britain was threatened with invasion, the loyal inhabitants of Kilmarnock, like those of many other towns of Scotland, formed themselves into a military body, under the name of the Kilmarnock Sharpshooters, or Rifle Volunteers. In the formation of this corps, which Thomson had the honour of commanding, he evinced considerable activity. The musical instruments and dresses of the band were purchased at his own expense, and he made many other sacrifices in the cause for which they were embodied. About the same time he received an order from the Duke of Kent, authorizing him to enlist local troops. This order he obeyed; and, as we have been told, paid two pounds sterling of bounty to each man from his own purse, until he had expended a great part of his fortune. Whether he intended the money thus laid out as a gift to his country, we have not been informed; at all events, it was never returned to him; and the consequence was, that his own private affairs began to assume an alarming appearance. His friends and relations perceiving this, they frequently cautioned him that he would one day or other involve himself in utter ruin by such conduct; and his brother, who was a partner with him in trade, fearing he might be entangled with his creditors, suddenly withdrew his name from the Company. These circumstances, and some family disputes which occurred about this time, induced his father to dispose of the tan-yard.

Our author then repaired to Edinburgh, where he was some time employed in writing for a periodical work, published under the title of the "Scottish Review." After being about one year in Edinburgh, he obtained a commission in the Argyleshire Militia, and embarked with that regiment for Ireland; but before

he had been long in that country, a severe malady, which had been for years gradually impairing his health, now increased to such a height that he found it necessary to resign his commission. He then obtained the situation of tutor in the family of Elliot Armstrong, Esq. of Donamon Castle, in the county of Roscommon, in which capacity he acted for two years. He afterwards took up his residence in the town of Elphin—a bishop's see in the county above mentioned—where he endeavoured by exercise in the open air to improve and invigorate his shattered constitution; but the disease he was afflicted with, which was that of palsy, became every day worse, and he returned to his native town, probably in the expectation of deriving from his friends and relations that consolation and support which he now so much needed. But Kilmarnock to him was no longer the scene of prosperity. Those who courted his society in his days of affluence, now looked on him with indifference. His father was tottering on the brink of the grave, and soon after died; and his brothers and sisters secured to themselves all that remained of the family property, and poor Thomson was left to struggle through the world as he best could for subsistence. While thus circumstanced, he married Widow Lewis, whose care and affection for him in his hours of trouble, served in some measure to render more cheerful and comfortable the few remaining years of his unfortunate life.

From his boyish days, Thomson was an occasional wooer of the Muses; and, during his wanderings in Ireland, he composed several little poems, which, along with others, he now submitted to the public in a small 18mo volume; and, on the 8th of August of the same year, (1817,) he issued the first number of a periodical work, entitled the "Ayrshire Miscellany, or Kilmarnock Literary Expositor," which continued to appear weekly till the beginning of May 1822. The price of each number was twopence, and the circulation, we believe, extended to almost every town and village in the county of Ayr, and to other places throughout the country. Kilmarnock at that time had no newspaper or magazine, and the *Ayrshire Miscellany* was therefore the only local medium through which the literary aspirants in the town and its neighbourhood could find publicity for their juve-

nile aspirations.* But, besides being instrumental in fostering the rising genius of the place, the *Miscellany* must have tended in no small degree to cherish a taste for literary information among the youth of Ayrshire, especially in those days when periodical literature was less accessible to the bulk of the people than it is at the present time.

Scattered throughout its pages are many interesting little pieces in prose and verse, several of which were from the pen of the Editor. The following we quote at random, as a specimen of the poetry :—

“ A FRAGMENT,

Supposed to be written by a Lover, on seeing his expected Bride clothed in the robes of Death.

In thee celestial beauty bloom'd ;
 A fragrant evergreen ;
 Which still thy countenance illumed,
 Thy manners graced—thy speech perfumed,
 And kept thy soul serene.

Hope whisper'd thou would'st be my bride,
 And fair the future smiled ;
 But Death did soon that hope deride,
 Soon swept thee into Ruin's tide,
 And my gay prospects spoil'd.

Yet still that lovely look of thine—
 The last thou ever gave ;
 That angel glance—that smile divine—
 Around my ravish'd heart will twine,
 And bind it to thy grave.

There may I soon be lowly laid,
 To mingle with the clay ;
 Though through the chambers of my head,
 Where love has oft his gambols play'd,
 The worm will find its way.

* Soon after the appearance of Thomson's *Miscellany*, the “ *Kilmarnock Mirror*, or *Literary Gleaner*,” was started ; but though it was conducted with considerable taste and ability, it lived only about sixteen months. Other magazines followed, but their existence was still more ephemeral. At present there are two newspapers published in the town.]

There, we from wo will both be free,
 And to oblivion giv'n ;
 But stay—sweet saint ! that is not thee,
 'Tis but thy former chains I see ;
 Thou now art *free—in Heav'n.*

Thou now hast tasted life's pure stream,
 That glads the bow'rs above ;
 Where God's best gifts unnumber'd team,
 Where saints in brightest beauty beam,
 And sing the song of love.—POLIBUS.*

In the course of a year or two after the termination of the Kilmarnock Expositor, Thomson collected his poetical pieces, and published them by subscription in a 12mo volume, bearing the title of the “Ayrshire Melodist, or Select Poetical Effusions.” † This work, by which his poetical character may be estimated, contains few poems of a very energetic or powerful description, but there is a harmony and a sweetness in the tones of his lyre, and a touching melancholy in his sentiments, that impart an agreeable charm to his verses ; and when we reflect on the many disadvantages under which he laboured, arising from the ruined state of his health, our opinion is, (to use the words of Southey, when speaking of the poems of Ragg,) that “what he has accomplished is surprising ; an age ago it would have been wonderful.” He seldom delights us with the mere creations of imagination. His own misfortunes in life, and the painful situation in which he was placed by nerveless debility, are generally the themes of his Muse ; and hence the tinge of sadness that pervades the greater part of his effusions. Indeed, his own mournful history may be read in his poetry. In the following extract from “Stanzas on December,” he feelingly alludes to his happier days, and briefly depicts the hapless condition to which he was ultimately reduced :—

* Under this signature a number of pleasing little pieces of prose and poetry appear in the Miscellany. They are the juvenile productions of Mr John Wilson, a native of Kilmarnock, who for some years past has been engaged in Ireland as a teacher of Phrenology.

† A manuscript copy of these poems was sent to his Majesty, King George the Fourth, and was deposited in the Royal Library at Carlton Palace. His Majesty also honoured the author by ordering his name at the head of his subscription list.

“ Then health was mine : I tasted human bliss ;
 Success in business, friendship’s social glow ;
 And, what on earth is purest happiness,
 Domestic joys, the sweetest far below.

Then HELEN lived, I tasted joys divine,
 Pure wedded love, and children’s heav’nly smile ;
 In wintry eve such transports once were mine,
 Years fled, nor wanted pleasures to beguile.

At home, abroad, within the torch’d hall,
 I heeded not December’s shorten’d day ;
 In friendship’s circle, or in crowded ball,
 Gaily I pass’d the wintry hours away.

How changed my state ! companionless I mourn,
 And give my sorrows to the piercing air ;
 My days are dreary, and my nights forlorn,
 I seek the grave, a refuge from despair.

Here let me rest, insensible to storms,
 Enjoy the calm deep silence of the tomb,
 And hide with brother and with sister worms,
 Nor fear its sullen and its dismal gloom.”

* * * *

The following verses, entitled “ Musings in October,” are characterized by the same spirit of pensiveness :—

“ October winds blow sharp and strong,
 The clouds veer through an angry sky,
 The muddy torrent rolls along,
 And scarce a bird is seen to fly.

Yet on the spray sweet Robin sings,
 His cheerful notes give fancy range ;
 He shakes the rain-drops from his wings,
 And lilts insensible to change.

O, could I careless hear the blast,
 Or placid see the torrent roll !
 Could I but smile when sky’s o’ercast,
 And lightnings dart from pole to pole !

O’er nature’s wreck I ceaseless mourn—
 Her blighted scenes I love to trace ;
 Too like this bosom, wounded, torn,
 This frame robb’d of its manly grace.

Betimes the darkest sky will clear ;
 The leafless tree will bud again ;
 The with'ring flow'rs new bloom shall wear,
 And plants and shrubs adorn the plain.

But when shall spring return to me ?
 Ah ! never on this earth below ;
 Hail ! land of immortality !
 Where storms of time shall cease to blow.

Be there my hopes, and there my joys,
 Anticipation's visions sweet ;
 Far from ambition's madd'ning noise,
 Till death shall sound the grand retreat.

Then farewell, change—and farewell, tears—
 Ye ne'er shall wound this breast again ;
 And farewell, doubts—and farewell, fears,
 My spirit treats you with disdain.

The rich man's sneer, the haughty's scorn,
 The vulgar taunts of low and mean,
 In this strange region have I borne,
 And long companionless have been.

Not so in yonder bright abode !
 Where rich and poor together meet,
 And humbly bend before their God,
 With hymns and songs divinely sweet.

This task be mine through endless years,
 I'll patient bear the storms of time ;
 And joyful leave this vale of tears,
 To breathe a mild celestial clime."

From his shorter productions, we select the following, which we consider equal in merit to many of our sacred lyrics :—

“ VERSES

WRITTEN ON THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

King of terrors, should I fear thee,
 With ghastly stare and visage grim ?
 No—faith and hope support and cheer me,
 How sweet to me salvation's hymn !
 ‘ O grave ! where is thy victory ?
 O death ! where is thy sting ? ’

What though affliction's baleful cup
 Is swelling to the brim ;

Yet martyr-like I'll sip it up,
 And sing salvation's hymn—
 ' O grave ! where is thy victory ?
 O death ! where is thy sting ?'

When close these weary aching eyes,
 Now rolling wild and dim ;
 Then glory's gleams break from the skies,
 I hear salvation's hymn—
 ' O grave ! where is thy victory ?
 O death ! where is thy sting ?'

Eternity ! thy fearful bound
 My spirit now would climb ;
 But rest this frame till trumpet sound,
 And wakeful myriads hymn—
 ' O grave ! where is thy victory ?
 O death ! where is thy sting ?'

From a note at the end of his poems, printed in 1817, it appears that he was then engaged in composing a Paraphrastic Version of the Psalms of David, adapted to New Testament times ; but it is probable he did not complete the work, as none of it ever appeared except the few pieces presented to the public as specimens. We will conclude our selections by subjoining two of these, the merits of which induce us to believe that Thomson was in some measure qualified for the task he had undertaken—a task which various writers have attempted with little success :—

“ PSALM I.

Thrice bless'd the prudent godly man,
 Whose passions never stray ;
 Who through life's short contracted span
 Holds on his heav'nly way.

He shuns the ungodly sons of dust,
 Who boast in scorner's chair ;
 His the assemblies of the just—
 His chiefest joys are there.

How sweet to him devotion's school,
 The Scripture his delight ;
 By day to him a sacred rule,
 His study ev'ry night.

Thus, 'mong the streams and crystal springs,
 The tree in verdure grows,
 And in its season fruit forth brings
 At autumn's golden close.

The wintry winds may furious rage,
 They only rage in vain ;
 Secure it waves from age to age,
 And blooms and bears again.

Not so the ungodly impious race,
 Of strange and wav'ring mind ;
 The Almighty drives them from their place
 As chaff before the wind.

God's judgments, ever wise and just,
 They may escape while here ;
 Yet to his sceptre bow they must,
 Before his throne appear.

Before a dread assembled world
 Shall Jesus hail his own ;
 But vengeance dire on sinners hurl'd
 Shall frown them from his throne."

“ PSALM V.

Again I'll raise the voice of praise
 To hail the dawn of day ;
 To God I'll raise my humble pray'r,
 Who wash'd my sins away.

O, what a dreadful soul had I,
 Dead, dark, and drear as night !
 How could a sinful mortal stand
 In pure Jehovah's sight !

Ransack the ocean's deep abyss,
 Search nature, and search art,
 There's nothing there, half, half so vile,
 As man's depraved heart.

What grateful thanks, then, do I owe
 To Jesus and his grace ;
 The wonders of redeeming love
 I'll never cease to trace.

Unseen, unheard, savo by my God,
 I'll pour forth secret pray'r ;
 Or go into his sanctuary,
 And meet with Jesus there.

In vain will hosts of secret foes
 Take nature by surprise ;
 Faith nobly yet shall keep the field,
 And on to glory rise.

Metinks I hear the angels shout,
 As glory's banner waves,
 While saints re-echo back the strain,
 'Tis Jesus only saves."

At the time the *Miscellany* was publishing, Thomson, though deprived of the use of his limbs, and consequently confined to his room, was rather robust and fresh in appearance ; and, judging from his demeanour during the little intercourse we had with him at that period, he seemed to enjoy a greater serenity of mind than one in his circumstances could have been expected to possess. The literary studies he was then engaged in, tended to smooth the asperities of adversity, and to afford him some consolation amidst his afflictions. When his weekly publication ceased to be published, he became more dejected and melancholy, and felt more intensely the misery of his condition. How mournful his own words !

“ Of health deprived, in misery's pain,
 Unpitied here I mutely mourn ;
 The scoff of fortune's cold disdain,
 A stranger, friendless, and forlorn.”

For some time previous to his dissolution, his trouble assumed a more formidable aspect, and gave strong indications that his earthly pilgrimage was drawing rapidly to a close. It would appear, however, that he was desirous of the change, as he was often heard to say that he wearied for the grave ; and though he frequently complains in his writings of the baseness and ingratitude of the world, which he in some degree experienced, yet he cherished no grudge or antipathy towards any of the human race, but displayed the warmest feelings of philanthropy till his death, which took place at Kilmarnock on the 23d of July 1832. He had just entered upon his fifty-eighth year, the last fifteen of which he spent in affliction and seclusion from the world.

From the Kilmarnock Society of Merchants, of which body Thomson was a member, he received a small weekly pension

during the long period of his illness. By his second marriage, he had two children, a son and daughter, who, with their widowed mother, still survive.

Mr John Kennedy, author of "Fancy's Tour with the Genius of Cruelty, and other Poems," &c., honoured Thomson by making him the subject of one of his songs. It is so graphic and sensible, if not original, that we think its insertion here will be agreeable to the reader:—

" JAMIE TAMSON.

AIR—*Highland Laddie.*

Wat ye wha's in yon town ?
 Jamie Tamson, Jamie Tamson ;
 Wi' no a hair on a' his crown,
 Bare as Samson, bare as Samson.
 What's the reason his hair's awa' ?
 Making thrang, man, making thrang, man,
 Sangs to tickle us, ane an' a',
 Short an' lang, man, short an' lang, man.

Jamie Tamson's then a Bard ?
 Naething nearer, naething nearer.
 That's the way his fate's sae hard ?
 Naething clearer, naething clearer !
 That's the way his elbows are bare ?
 Bread is sma', man, bread is sma', man,
 And his brow is nicked wi' care ?
 Save us a', man, save us a', man.

Oh ! but I am like to cry,
 Aft dejected, aft dejected,
 To see how the noble Bardies die
 Sae neglected, sae neglected :
 To think on the coofs that strut and swell,
 Bien an' braw, man, bien an' braw, man,
 Wha, just like our chapel-bell,
 Hum an' ha', man, hum an' ha', man.

Is na this a serious thing—
 Rin an' print it, rin an' print it ;
 Tell yon chap they ca' the King,
 Oh, an he kent it ! oh, an he kent it !
 He would surely cause a law
 To be enacted, be enacted,
 That the Bardies, ane an' a',
 Should be respected, be respected.

That instead o' bigging stanes,
 What a blether ! what a blether !
 On the weary Bardie's banes,
 They wad gather, they wad gather
 Something that wad thiek'n the brose
 O' the Bardies, o' the Bardies ;
 Tak' the jock-nebs frae the nose,
 An' co'er the hurdies, co'er the hurdies.

O, that I had siller to spare !
 Killie's Bard, then, Killie's Bard, then,
 Should be happy late an' ear' ;
 Nobly heard, then, nobly heard, then—
 Heard as he used to be, when he
 Whistled an' blew, man, whistled an' blew, man,
 On the green-boys* on the lea,
 Ay, that wad do, man, that wad do, man.

But since fortune's sae unkin',
 He an' I, man, he an' I, man,
 Maun just hope that we will fin',
 By an' by, man, by an' by, man,
 Happier days, when care shall fling,
 Mad to see, man, mad to see, man,
 Bards triumphant on the wing,
 Rich an' free, man, rich an' free, man.

Then, wha lives in yon town ?
 Jamie Tamson, Jamie Tamson ;
 Wi' a garlan' on his crown,
 Stroug as Samson, strong as Samson ?
 Great in counsel, at the pen ;
 Leal an' canty, leal an' canty ;
 Great, the first, an' best o' men,
 Stow'd wi' plenty, stow'd wi' plenty."

* The Kilmarnock Sharpshooters, of which corps, as is stated in the preceding sketch, Thomson had the honour of being first Captain.

JOHN GOLDIE,

THE ORIGINAL EDITOR OF THE PAISLEY ADVERTISER.

THE subject of this memoir was born at Ayr on the 22d of December 1798.* His father, John Goldie, shipmaster, was long known as captain of the *Lucy*, and afterwards of the *Hope-well*, two vessels belonging to that port. By his wife, Helen Campbell, Captain Goldie had several children. John, the second oldest of the family, evinced a taste for learning at an early age. Those who were in the habit of frequenting his father's fireside, recollect observing him more frequently engaged with his book than mingling in pastimes with his compeers. In his father's house he had a small apartment allotted to himself, where his little library was arranged with great precision and neatness. In this *sanctum* many of his leisure hours were passed. He was, however, no recluse. On the contrary, some of the friends of his boyhood speak of him, with the utmost affection, as a lively, good-natured, and ingenious youth. Theatricals occupied no small share of his attention at this juvenile period. Along with a select party, similar in years to himself, he formed an amateur company, and procured dresses, not perhaps of the most appropriate description, but sufficiently so to please their boyish tastes. The pieces chosen for performance were of a character suited to their youthful enthusiasm; such as *Douglas* and the *Lady of the Lake*. In the latter, Goldie enacted the part of *Roderick Dhu*. The martial character of the drama requiring a

* The following is an extract from the Register of Births and Baptisms in the Parish of Ayr:—"John Goldie, lawful son of John Goldie, shipmaster in Ayr, and Helen Campbell, his spouse, was born on the 22d of December 1798, and baptized the 23d of said month by the Rev. Doctor William Dalrymple." This benevolent gentleman, at whose hands Goldie received the rite of baptism, was the "D'rymple mild," noticed by Burns in "The Kirk's Alarm."

goodly display of warlike weapons, the party felt the utmost difficulty in supplying the desideratum, until, fertile in expedients, the warlike *Roderick* contrived to procure from his father's vessel, the *Hopewell*, as many old cutlasses as sufficed.

Having acquired an excellent education, chiefly at the Ayr Academy, Goldie, when about fifteen years old, removed to Paisley, where he entered into the employment of Mr William Lyall, a respectable and extensive grocer, in whose house he was also boarded. The benefit derived from the instruction and example of this worthy man he often gratefully acknowledged in after life. He remained with Mr Lyall for some years, during which he found sufficient leisure for mental cultivation. In the *Ayrshire Magazine*, published at Irvine in 1817, by Mr Menons, one or two poetical effusions appear from the pen of Goldie, under the signature of *Nichol Nemo*, dated from Paisley. These were the first of his contributions to the press.

Leaving Mr Lyall's service, after the expiry of his engagement, Goldie procured a situation in a china and stoneware shop in Glasgow. Subsequently, he had the charge of a shop in the same line at Paisley. About this time the Radical disturbances of 1819–20 occurred. Participating in the loyal feelings by which the more wealthy portion of the community were in general actuated, he became a member of a volunteer rifle corps, which was formed at Paisley for the purpose of aiding the government. It was at this period that he wrote the pieces—"Sharp Pikes and Radical Clegs," and "Radical Bodies gae Hame," which appear in his published volume. The following manuscript effusion has also reference to the Radical era:—

“ EXTEMPORE SONG, SUNG AT A RIFLE MEETING.

Up an' Waur them a', Willie.

Now here we're met, a smilin' set,

In martial order a', Willie;

Our claes sae green, sae neat and clean,

In trowth we're unco braw, Willie.

Up an' waur them a', &c.

To lead the van the lot was cast,

That lot on us did fa', Willie;

Fate made us first, we'll ne'er be last,
 Except to rin awa', Willie.
 Up an' waur them a', &c.

Nae doubt the times are freezin' hard,
 O, for a speedy thaw, Willie !
 Would Fortune's sun upon us shine,
 'Twad mak' us merry a', Willie.
 Up an' waur them a', &c.

Whate'er betide, may Peace still ride
 Triumphant o'er us a, Willie ;
 Her guns nae lock—her sabres broke—
 Nae bullets she's ava, Willie.
 Up an' waur them a', &c.

May nocht but rain e'er rust or stain
 The bay'nets that we draw, Willie ;
 Nor be't our lot to fire a shot,
 Except to kill a crow, Willie.
 Up an' waur them a', &c.

If Britain's foes should e'er oppose
 Our country, king, and law, Willie ;
 To meet them, lad, the rifle squad
 Wad ne'er be sweirt nor slaw, Willie.
 Up an' waur them a', &c.

For Britain's cause an' Britain's king,
 Our latest breath we'll draw, Willie ;
 Yet still as freemen we will stan',
 As freemen we will fa', Willie.
 Up an' waur them a', &c."

In the year 1820, and during his residence in Paisley, Goldie married a daughter of Adam M'Cargow, carrier between that town and Glasgow. Of this marriage, three sons were born, of whom only one survives. In the following year he returned to his native town of Ayr, and there commenced business on his own account in the china and stoneware trade. The business proved unprofitable, and, ere long, he became insolvent. His prospects were now very gloomy. With a wife and two children dependent on him, he knew not where to turn for assistance ; for by this time his father was dead, and his widowed mother was not in circumstances to afford him any material aid.

Fortunately for Goldie, his literary talent had not been alto-

gether hid under a bushel. He had contributed occasionally to the *Ayr Courier* newspaper—a journal of moderate politics, begun in 1819—and he was still farther known in the circle of his acquaintances by the publication, in 1821, of a small pamphlet, entitled “Poems and Songs, by Nichol Nemo.” Thus favourably recommended, he was appointed assistant in the office of that journal, which was then under the management of Mr Archibald Bell. Soon afterwards, on the retirement of Mr Bell, he succeeded to the entire control of the concern. This occurred in 1822. For some time affairs went on swimmingly with Goldie. In the conducting of the journal, which devolved upon him in all its details save the political or leading article, he displayed very considerable taste, and was the means of drawing forth no small degree of local talent by the encouragement which he gave to merit, however obscure.

Goldie was of an ardent, enthusiastic temperament, and possessed a strong relish for society. One of the fraternity of freemasons, a society then in much greater repute than it is now, he was a frequent participant in the festivities of “the Sons of Light.” He was, too, a most enthusiastic admirer of Burns. Through his exertions, an Ayr Burns’ Club was formed, which continued to meet for a few years, but gradually died away when no longer supported by his exertions, and the interest which his literary talent gave to its meetings. The following lines, on the “Anniversary of Burns,” hitherto unpublished, were composed for one of the Club meetings:—

“ Fill, fill to the toast, while each bosom is glowing,
 And eyes like the foaming glass sparkle with light ;
 Oh ! when should our hearts and our cups be o’erflowing,
 If ’twas not to honour the toast of to-night ?
 ’Tis not to the hero, the statesman, or woman,
 Though these we’ll remember with joy in their turns ;
 No ! the bumper we quaff ’s to the Poet and Ploughman—
 The name which we honour ’s the name of our BURNS.

His, his was the breast, where a soul independent,
 In sunshine or storm, a pure atmosphere found ;
 Like the lightnings of midnight, it beam’d most resplendent
 When dangers and darkness closed thickest around.

And whether our heads be the flaxen or hoary,
 We've all wept and smiled o'er his pages by turns—
 In the magical power of his wood-notes we'll glory,
 And hallow the day that gave birth to a BURNS."

While conducting the *Courier*, Goldie became a member of the Ayrshire corps of yeomanry. The following lines were written on that occasion:—

“ OFFER OF SERVICE,

To the Quartermaster of the Ayrshire Yeomanry Cavalry.

‘ List, list—oh, list !’—HAMLET.

Know ye, James Watling,* Quartermaster,
 I Nichol Nemo, poetaster,
 O' my freewill hae got to say,
 That I at Ayr this fourteenth day
 O' *March*† (a month just made to list in,)
 My gray goosequill hae ta'en my fist in,
 To let you an' your Captain ken,
 Gif ye be scarce o' beasts or men,
 I hae a horse, or rather mare,
 An' in your ranks I should na care
 To mount her for a year or twa,
 Gif death an' skaith should spare us a'.

As for the beast, she's fit for duty,
 Though, like her master, nae great beauty;
 Nae high-bred, mettled, spankin' blood,
 That skelps like lightnin' o'er the road;
 Nor is she strong for cart or pleugh,
 But she sairs me, an' that's enugh.

As for mysel', wi' heart an' han'
 I shall obey ilk just comman';
 Provided always, cap an' feather,
 Wi' mountin's o' claith, steel, an' leather,
 Shall be provided first by you,
 As is ilk tested sodger's due.

Whene'er Will Culbertson's‡ loud horn
 Shall soun' ' turn out' at nicht or morn,
 I shall be present on the fiel',
 Be't foot parade or mornin' drill;
 An' ance I get a fortnight's hammerin'
 I' the awkward squad, frae Sergeant Cameron,§

* Son of Mr Watling, landlord of the Black Bull Inn, Ayr. † 1822.

‡ Trumpeter to the Ayr troop.

§ Drill-Sergeant to the corps.

I'll ken ilk order he can mention,
 At 'stand at ease,' be all 'attention'—
 Like *spinners* help to *form a line*,
 Like *dandies* learn to dress in time,
 Mak' *squares* like ony *timmer-whiter*,
 An' *charge*, ay, like a very WRITER.

Besides a' this, if foes should e'er,
 Or even Radicals appear,
 I'll no be last, believe my word,
 To sen' them 'Hame' wi' pen or sword.
 Now, if ye like the terms aforesaid,
 There need be very little more said;
 To ser' his Majesty I'm willin',
Hic manus est, let's see the shillin'."

Towards the close of the year 1822, Goldie published by subscription a small volume of "Poems and Songs," which he dedicated to James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. He was prompted to this, less by ambition than from a laudable desire to extricate himself from those pecuniary embarrassments in which his previous misfortunes had involved him. To the subscription list of this volume no fewer than forty of the leading literary characters of the metropolis added their names. This was accomplished entirely through the exertions of Mr Bell; and, it is believed, had no slight effect in biasing the people of Ayrshire considerably in favour of the author. In the preface, he intimated that circumstances of little interest to the public had induced him to give publicity to the selection in that shape. The success of the expedient, though not equal to his necessities, proved beyond his expectations. As a literary production, the volume was perhaps not calculated greatly to extend his reputation. None of the pieces display much of the depth or imagination of a rich poetic genius; nevertheless, there is a chasteness in his graver verses, and a vein of humour in the lighter, that gave fair promise of more powerful efforts. "The Hour of Distress" is one of the best of his sentimental effusions:—

" O! 'tis not while the fairy breeze fans the green ocean,
 That the safety and strength of the bark can be shown;
 And 'tis not in prosperity's hour the devotion,
 The fervour, and truth of a friend can be known.

No! the bark must be proved when the tempest is howling,
 When dangers and mountain-waves close on her press ;
 The friend, when the sky of adversity's scowling,
 For the touchstone of friendship's—the hour of distress.

When prosperity's daystar beams pure and unclouded,
 Then thousands will mingle their shouts round its throne ;
 But, oh ! let its light for one moment be shrouded,
 And the smiles of the faithless, like shadows, are gone.

Then comes the true friend, who to guile is a stranger,
 The heart of the lone-one to sooth and caress ;
 While his smile, like the beacon-light, blazing in danger,
 Sheds a beam o'er the gloom of the hour of distress.

O ! 'tis sweet 'mid the horrors of bleak desolation,
 While pleasure and hope seem eternally flown,
 When the heart is first lit by the dear consolation,
 That a heaven of happiness yet may be won.

Grief fades like the night-cloud, bliss mingles with sorrows,
 When the first sunny rays through the darkness appear ;
 And the rainbow of hope beameth bright, as it borrows
 All its splendour and light from a smile and a tear.

O ! 'tis thou whose life's path hath been clouded and cheerless,
 Can feel that full burst of pure transport and bliss,
 When the trusted and tried friend comes boldly and fearless,
 To share, or relieve, the dark hour of distress.

Past griefs may yet cease to be thought on, but never
 Can time make the feeling of gratitude less ;
 May the blessing of God rest for ever and ever
 On him who forsook not in hours of distress !”

The “ Lines on the Funeral of Sir Alexander Boswell, Bart.,”
 are not without merit :—

“ O ! heard you you trumpet sound sad on the gale ?
 O ! heard you the voices of weeping and wail ?
 O ! saw you the horsemen in gallant array,
 As in sorrow and silence they moved on their way ?

* * * *

When the train of love-mourners arrived at the path
 That leads to the desolate mansions of death,
 O ! mark'd you each horseman lean sad on his sword,
 While the corse slowly pass'd of the chief he adored ?

* * * *

Thy halls, Auchinleck ! are all desolate now ;
 Ayr ! roll on in sorrow, in solitude flow ;
 For low lies thy bard, who so sweetly did sing—
 Thy chieftain so true to his country and king.”

The stanzas beginning—

“ Oh ! talk not of love’s flow’ry chain,
 It may not bind this bosom now—”

also deserve to be particularly noticed. Among the songs is one entitled “The Dandy,” originally sung by Mr Jones at the Glasgow Circus. It became very popular, and was not without its effect in extirpating that monstrous brood of foplings which some twenty years ago threatened to metamorphose the human species. As love-verses, the lines beginning—

“ And can thy bosom bear the thought
 To part frae love and me laddie—”

are exceedingly good. The song “Welcome Royal Geordie,” was composed on the occasion of the King’s visit to Scotland in 1822, and was sung, with much applause, by Mr Mackay, in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, on the evening of his Majesty’s landing. Goldie repaired to Edinburgh at the time, and keenly participated in the exuberant display of loyalty which the occasion was so well calculated to excite. “Royal Geordie’s Landet Now,” is another effusion of that joyous period.

Unfortunately for Goldie, the *Ayr and Wigtonshire Courier*, as the paper was latterly designated, was involved in difficulties. Though well conducted, the journal gradually fell off in circulation. Under these circumstances a company of shareholders having been formed—who purchased the copyright and materials of the journal—the management of the paper passed into other hands, and Goldie was once more turned adrift on the world.

In the hope of obtaining employment in connexion with the metropolitan press, our author now resolved on proceeding to London. With this view he procured letters of introduction ; and, having made such arrangements regarding his family as his limited means would admit, he set out for London, where he

arrived on the 17th or 18th of December 1823. From notes in his own handwriting, with which we have been kindly furnished, he appears to have kept a journal of his proceedings for a few days. These interesting jottings afford the best commentary we could offer at this particular juncture of his history. While perusing them it is scarcely possible to avoid filling up the outline in our own feelings, when we think of the many contending emotions that must have agitated the bosom of the writer, as, threading his way a solitary wanderer through the busy Babylon, he found by each successive day's experience that the object of his pursuit was still distant and uncertain :—

“ *Thursday, 19th Dec. 1823.* Called upon Mr J. Mayne, at the Star Office,* with an introductory letter from Mr Boaz. A fine hearty elderly gentleman—received me in the most friendly manner. Explained anent the *Ayr Courier*, and proposed to show him Mr C.'s (Rev. Mr Cuthill's) letter. ‘No, no,’ said he, ‘your own appearance is the best letter of recommendation.’ Was sorry he had no opening in his own office; but would do every thing in his power, not only on account of my friends, but because I was a Scotsman, and, as he once was, a stranger in London. Showed him several of my letters, one addressed Editor of *Globe*. He directed me to ask for Col. Torrens. Upon second thoughts, said he, ‘Inquire for Dr Croly; he is a bit of a physiognomist, and I daresay he'll be pleased with you.’ Advised me to address a letter to Clements of the *Morning Chronicle*, which I will do to-morrow. Offered me tickets to the Theatres, and invited me to call often upon him betwixt ten and one forenoon. A long residence in London has not shaken the Scotch accent from his tongue. Called at Mr Tegg's;† warmly received, and shown by Mrs T. into the *sanctum*—took a glass of wine—chatted with Mrs T., and was introduced to Mr and Miss T. All intelligent people. Got a letter from Mr T. to Mr Roden, *Morning Herald*. Called, but did not find him. Called on R. Burns (son of the Poet) at the Stamp-Office. Little black-looking fellow, resembling the portraits of his father a good deal. In manner, rather repulsive and cold—thought him a scion almost unworthy his parent tree. Promised to call on Monday. Called on Mr Wooler, at Gough Square, Fleet Street. House very respectable. Shown into his writing-room, and had a few minutes' conversation with the Black Dwarf. He informed me the *Statesman* (newspaper) was about to be sold; and, not being aware what side of politics the new proprietor might be disposed to espouse, he thought it prudent to lie on his oars for a short time. Should arrangements permit his resumption of the editorial sceptre, (he) promised to do all in his power (for me). Invited to call again. Came home; wrote a letter to Clements, to be delivered in the morning. Met John Fergusson, with whom I spent the evening.

* The late John Mayne, author of “The Siller Gun,” and the well-known editor of the *Star* newspaper.

† Bookseller and publisher.

Friday. Having sent Mr Cuthill's letter to Clements, could not go elsewhere till I received it again. Went to see the British Museum.

Saturday. Called at the Observer Office; was told Mr C. had got my letter; and that he would drop me an answer. Called again in the evening—no answer yet—began to entertain hopes—was desired to call on Monday. Spent the evening with my friend Croly at Walters'; a number of Scotsmen present; (heard) several Scots songs, which made my heart thrill with the thoughts of the days that are gone; came away at twelve; would sing no more after that hour.

Sunday. Dined with P. C. On walking past St Paul's met Mr Finlayson, the celebrated inventor of the rid-plough. Glad to see me; and invited me to breakfast on Monday. Went to a Scotch chapel at night. Heard Mr —— from Kilmarnock preach. Church had all the primitive plainness of a country place of worship. Thought of home and other days. Met Mr M'Lure, &c.

Monday. Called on Mr Mayne; stept across to the *Observer* office, and got a card from Mr Clements, saying that my recommendation would have been a sufficient passport, had there been a vacancy in his office, which he was sorry to say there was not. Rather a damper this! Mayne encouraged me not to let my noble spirits droop, (and) gave me a double ticket to Surrey Theatre. Went alone—was much pleased with the splendour and elegance of the house. Took lodgings in the Oxford Arms Passage, and, with the kind assistance of Mr Finlayson, carried my luggage thither. Found the lodgings comfortable, and believe the landlady to be honest.

Tuesday. Called on Mr Mayne and returned him his ticket, with thanks. Asked me to write a notice of the performance for the *Star*. Promised to do it, but could not find a bill with the performers' names. Called on Mr B. Beaumont. Received me in a very gentlemanly manner, read my letter, and promised to use all his influence among his newspaper friends. Waited on Mr Black, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. He is a Scotsman, and seemed much pleased with Mr Cuthill's letter—thought there was no doubt of my succeeding if I had patience and perseverance—asked me to call again, and bring a volume of my poems. Called next on Mr Roden, *Morning Herald Office*, with a note from Mr Tegg explanatory of my object—full. Roden informs me that a great part of the newspaper intelligence is furnished by occasional reporters, who are not attached to any office, but hand in their communications to several. If accepted, they are paid at the rate of three-halfpence per line. Some earn upwards of £3 per week. This is an unsettled and precarious life that I never would engage in. Came home about four o'clock, and remained within during the evening.

Wednesday. Day wet—did not go out—wrote 'Verses to my First-born,' and a letter to Mr Northhouse.*

Thursday. Christmas. No business done—all the shops shut up. Appointed to go to a party in the evening, but was disappointed by the person I agreed to go with. Remained at home during the evening.

Friday. Called on Mr Mayne, presented him with a copy Poems, and read him 'Lines to my First-born.' Seemed to admire them much, and bade me show them to Mr Black, who, he doubted not, would insert them in the *Morning Chronicle*, and he

* At that time editor of the *Glasgow Free Press*.

would copy them into the *Star*. Told me of a Mr M'Christie, from Ayrshire, who had come here a poor lad, but had now risen to some eminence and a little wealth as a short-hand reporter of law cases. Recollected him a teacher with whom I was a few months in Mr Jamieson's old school—took his address, and resolved to call. Waited on Mr Black, and spent about an hour with him; he glanced over my book, and expressed his opinion in a very flattering manner. Read him the verses (to my First-born), a copy of which he requested for the *Chronicle*. Advised me to get a few of my prose paragraphs cut out to show, and to call with them for his inspection. Told me he would at all times be glad to see me. (I then) called on Mr M'Christie; found him in very respectable chambers. (He) was glad to see me, and recollected all our folks—invited me to dine on Sunday at ——."

Thus abruptly closes the journal of poor Goldie. Though its statements are simple and unvarnished, they disclose enough to show what must have been the sorrowings of the writer, as he witnessed day after day passing away without bringing him one step nearer the attainment of that hoped-for employment which his necessities compelled him to solicit. No one who has sojourned among strangers, and felt the withering sensations arising from a similarity of circumstances, can fail to appreciate the feelings which dictated, as he thought of home and his little one, the "Lines to his First-born," repeatedly alluded to in the notes already quoted. The verses appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, *Star*, and several other journals of the day, and were entitled

“ THE YEAR THAT'S AWA'.

A Farewell to my First-Born. (For January 1824.)

Fareweel to you, bonnie wee boy!
 Laith am I to lea' ye ava,
 When I think how ye've made my proud heart beat wi' joy,
 'Mid the cares o' the year that's awa'.

Though the stranger be couthy an' kin',
 Though open his heart an' his ha';
 Yet he'll near wile my thoughts frae my bonnie wee frien'
 Wha has cheer'd the dull year that's awa'.

Aft haffins in grief, half in joy,
 Does the tear frae thy father's e'e fa',
 When he meets some sweet face like his bonnie wee boy,
 An' thinks on the year that's awa'.

Thy prattle has cheer'd, while the frown
 O' adversity scowl'd on us a';

An' thy smile has been balm for the deep-stricken woun',
 An' the woes o' the year that's awa'.

Then weel may I lo'e my wee son ;
 O, he's dearest to me o' them a' !
 An' I'll pray for his weel in the year that's to come,
 As I've done in the year that's awa'.

Then, fareweel, my bonnie wee boy !
 May the blessin' o' God on ye fa' ;
 An' lang may ye mak' my fond heart proud wi' joy,
 As ye've done in the year that's awa'."

Though we have not the means of tracing the subsequent history of Goldie in London, with any thing like the accuracy with which he has himself noted the proceedings of the few first days, his want of success and consequent unhappiness were not unknown to his friends. Among other intimacies formed during his stay, he became acquainted with John Mactaggart, author of the Gallovedian Encyclopædia—the most indescribable perhaps of any work that ever issued from the teeming press. John was at the time “driving away,” as he terms it, being occupied with the preparation of his Encyclopædia ; in the columns of which he gave a flattering notice of his newly-acquired friend, no doubt with the laudable intention of helping him on in the world.

In connexion with Mactaggart, and one or two other persons, Goldie formed the project of publishing *The London Scotsman*—a newspaper professing to devote more attention to Scottish interests and intelligence than is perhaps consistent with the interests or character of a purely English journal. This was a desideratum then, and in some measure still wanting ; but though well designed, and likely to have been crowned with ultimate success, three publications of this print were all that appeared. The capital of the parties engaged in it was totally inadequate for such an undertaking.

Goldie was now destined to feel all the horrors that spring from disappointed hopes and the certain prospect of immediate embarrassments. The scanty funds he had been enabled to scrape together before leaving Ayr, were exhausted ; the speculation on which he had reared not a few airy castles proved a fail-

ure ; and, notwithstanding all his exertions, no situation appeared likely to open for him so speedily as the urgency of his necessities required. The letters written at this period to some of his friends in Ayr, evince the acuteness of his feelings, under circumstances equally trying and new to him ; for, though his previous career had not been prosperous, he had never before felt what it was to be absolutely penniless and a stranger. Some idea of his situation may be formed from the fact, that one day a countryman, and an old Ayrshire acquaintance of his own, who kept a boot-shop in London, called at his lodgings for the price of a pair with which he had furnished him a short time before. Goldie stated his circumstances, and begged that he would not hurry him for a few days till he saw what might cast up ; but this hard-hearted son of Crispin was inexorable, and would not quit the premises until the cash should be forthcoming. “ Then,” said Goldie, “ as that is impossible at present, you must take back the boots.” So saying, he pulled them off his feet ; and handed them to the creditor, who coolly carried them away, leaving his former friend to contrive what shift his forlorn circumstances might best suggest.

After several months of unavailing effort spent in London, Goldie returned to his native country ; and having paid a short visit to his family in Ayr, he proceeded to Paisley, where he was kindly received by his friends. Here he projected and succeeded in establishing the *Paisley Advertiser*—the first newspaper ever published in that town. The necessary capital was raised in small shares, which were held by an extensive proprietary, and the first number appeared on the 9th of October 1824. At that period party politics were somewhat in abeyance ; and, though with a Tory leaning, the course chalked out by Goldie was a middle one. Notwithstanding the moderate tone professed, and the judicious views promulgated, both in the prospectus and in the first number, the *Paisley Advertiser* was not permitted to find its way to public support without opposition. A Radical journal, called “ The Renfrewshire Chronicle,” was commenced, but it survived only a few months.

Goldie formed an acquaintance with several gentlemen in Paisley, who interested themselves in the establishment of the *Advertiser*. Among these were the late William Motherwell, afterwards of the *Glasgow Courier*, and Mr P. A. Ramsay, now in Edinburgh, both of whom were then resident in Paisley.* They were shareholders of the journal, and contributed, by their pens and their influence, to promote its success. The encouragement experienced, and the valuable friendships formed, tended to repay the buffetings of fortune Goldie had formerly endured. He has often been heard to express himself warmly on this subject, and to acknowledge the disinterested kindness of his friends. The journal which he so successfully established still exists, and has all along maintained a respectable character.

The duties devolving upon him did not prevent Goldie from occasionally evoking the muse; and the "Poet's Corner" of the *Advertiser* was not unfrequently enriched with his productions. In 1825 and 1826, he edited "The Spirit of British Song," published in numbers by Mr M'Phun of Glasgow, and completed in two neat volumes 18mo. The work, which was appropriately dedicated to Miss Stephens, the celebrated vocalist, was well received, and obtained an extensive circulation. In the selections, he displayed his usual good taste. Scarcely had the last number issued from the press, when the career of the editor, just as his prospects had begun to brighten, and to give promise of future sunshine, was cut short in a manner most sudden and unexpected. He died in his own house, on Monday the 27th of February 1826, being only in the twenty-eighth year of his age. On an examination of his body, it appeared that this sad event was caused by the bursting of two bloodvessels in the head. His death, so generally was he known and esteemed, caused a great sensation in Paisley. In the next number of the *Advertiser* the following notice of his demise appeared:—

* To Mr Ramsay we are indebted for having supplied us with the manuscripts quoted, and with the greater part of the materials from which this memoir has been compiled.

" DEATH OF MR GOLDIE.

It is with feelings of the deepest sorrow that we have to discharge the melancholy duty of announcing the awfully sudden death of MR JOHN GOLDIE, the able and intelligent Editor of this Journal. On Monday evening, at a few minutes after six o'clock, this mournful and distressing event occurred. On the forenoon of that day he had been occupied with some professional business in Glasgow; he returned apparently in good health, dined with his family, and remained at home during the afternoon. Having an engagement in the evening, he retired to his own apartment to dress; but he had been there only a few minutes when a sharp shrill cry, and the sound as if of the fall of a heavy body in the room, alarmed the family. The door was immediately opened, and the first object which presented itself was his lifeless body extended on the floor. Medical aid was instantly procured, but in vain. On examination of the body on Wednesday, it was found that two bloodvessels in the head were ruptured.

Thus, in the very flower of manhood, when the world, and all that the world is worth for, were brightening around him, was this amiable and accomplished individual snatched from the bosom of his family, and the circle of his numerous friends, by an awful and mysterious stroke of fate. The grief in which his relatives and friends have been plunged by this sad bereavement, it is in vain to describe; while the universal sympathy and regret which it has excited in the bosom of every one who had the slightest acquaintanceship with him, render a just, though unavailing, tribute to his many virtues and shining abilities.

The able manner in which he carried this Journal, himself its projector, through many difficulties and obstructions, can only be appreciated by those few who had opportunities of intimately knowing the peculiarly adverse circumstances in the midst of which it was at first produced, and against which it had to struggle; but all can judge for themselves of the candid, the manly, the clever, and highly creditable manner in which its columns were edited by him—a manner alike honourable to his own unweary exertions, and satisfactory to all who were interested in its success. His abilities were at once recognised by contemporary journalists; and this paper, under his happy auspices, soon occupied a prominent place in the periodical literature of the country. Were it for nothing else, the name of Goldie will be historically remembered as the first Editor of the first newspaper which appeared in this town."

The following is another highly creditable tribute to his memory:—

" MR WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

Paisley, March 1829.

SIR,

I have to apologise for taking a liberty, which you will possibly consider impudent, if not impertinent, in a person wholly unknown to you, especially as neither the influence of wealth, nor the eminence of situation, give him a claim to the 'light of your countenance.' But, sir, the lark's song is not less ardent that his pinions are gray, or that his nest is in the clod—himself a thing of earth, he peals his music amongst the clouds of heaven!

Mr Goldie was my friend. You, sir, were his. This consanguinity, joined to a long-entertained admiration of your talents, suggested the attaching of your name to the inclosed 'trifle.' If in this proceeding there be aught offensive to your feelings, I shall be truly sorry, and would say 'Forget and forgive'—

Buried be all that has been done,
Or say that nought is done amiss.

On this I shall rest, that whatever be its faults, it has, with regard to yourself and to Mr Goldie, at least the merit of being in the one case a tribute of sincere sorrow, and in the other a testimony of sincere respect.

I am,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

32 New Street,

THOMAS DICK."

The writer of this letter was then, we believe, and is still, a teacher in Paisley. The following is the "trifle" alluded to:—

"SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR JOHN GOLDIE.

And art thou gone in manhood's vig'rous prime !
 Just when thy fortune had begun to smile,
 And the fresh breathings of thy soul sublime
 Promised another genius to our isle ?
 Like a sweet harp-tone, whose delightful chime
 Was heard, and died the instant even while
 We listen'd, fled thy spirit ; and the smile
 Of health was round thee till the very time
 Death seized his prey ! Nor can it be a crime
 That from my heart one tear it should beguile ;
 For we were early friends, and oft would wile
 An hour of leisure with each other's rhyme.
 Now musing on thy sudden doom of dread,
 Amid these soft'ning dreams, I scarce can think thou'rt dead."

Besides his published poems, Goldie left a variety of manuscript pieces, some of them written out in a fair hand, and bound up along with a copy of his printed volume. From these pages we have already quoted one or two pieces ; but the following, perhaps the best of all his writings, is so affectingly pathetic, that we stop not to offer any apology for its insertion. It appears from the date, "March 1824," to have been written while the author was in London:—

" THE FOUNDLING.

When sick or woe, the puir man's wean
 Kens that a mither's smile is sweet ;
 The joyless orphan, left alane,
 Aboon a father's grave can greet :
 Sic bliss, alake ! is no for me ;
 For ne'er has't been my lot to prove
 How sweet's the blink o' mither's e'e,
 How warm the glow o' father's love.

My birth-night saw me at yon door,
 The cauld, cauld yird my cradle's place ;
 An' winter's snaws were driftin' o'er
 My sightless e'en an' tender face.
 December's win's were blawin' chill,
 An' cauld an' nippin' was the air—
 The mother's heart was caulder still
 That laid her sinless baby there.

The han' that fed an' clad was kin',
 An' aye shall be richt dear to me ;
 But warmer love I fain wad ken
 Than warmest gratitude can be.
 A mither's love I fain wad share,
 For, oh ! this heart to love was made ;
 Wad hear a father's e'cnin' pray'r
 Ca' Heav'n's blessin's on my head.

When join'd wi' younkers in their play,
 I whiles forget a mither's wrang ;
 But when the weat or closin' day
 Gars ilka playmate hameward gang—
 O ! then I fin' my bosom swell
 Wi' feelin's that it lang has nurst,
 An' yearn a parent's love to feel
 Till whiles I think my heart wad burst.

When seated by the ingle side
 Some neebour's blithesome weans I see,
 While leuks that speak a father's pride
 Are beamin' frae their father's e'e.
 I strive to choke the burstin' sigh,
 An' dicht awa' the burnin' tear ;
 Syne leuk upon yon gowden sky,
 An' houp I hae a father there."

Another manuscript volume, which was compiled by our Poet during his melancholy sojourn in London, is entitled—

“ MAHOMET'S COFFIN ;

A

COLLECTION OF ODDS AND ENDS,

SCARCELY WORTH PRESERVATION,

YET

RATHER GUID FOR FOWL SINGIN'.

London, January 1824.

From the pages of this collection, we quote the following as a specimen of the author's talent for humorous writing :—

“ THE BATTLE OF BOTHWELL BRIG.

Sung by MR ANGEL, at Paisley Theatre, in the character of a Private in the Renfrewshire Militia, in 1825.

Your pardon, kin' folks, and I'll soon tell you how
A *private* in *public* thus makes his first bow—
Traitor-like, *drawn* and *quarter'd*, you see me appear—
For they *drew* me at Renfrew and *quarter'd* me here.

Since a soldier they made me, a smart life I've led ;
I can now *dress* a *squad*, sir, as well as a *web*.
Though *forward* at first, now my distance I keep,
And though once *shallow-pated* they've form'd me *two deep*.

To-night my Poll ask'd me to go to the play,
Where our tickets, she said, would just cost a day's pay ;
O ! I couldn't refuse when I gazed on her charms,
So I threw down my gun, and got Poll *under arms*.

Then to Smith-hills* we *march'd*, and *fell in* with the crowd,
Who were crushing, and reeling, and bawling so loud ;
When I saw that to squeeze us it was their intention,
I bawl'd out ' *stand at ease,*' but no one paid *attention*.

At length I got forward with Poll in my hand,
And we took up our station *in rear of the band* ;
The house look'd so gay, and our seats were so nice,
And though *high* in their place, they were low in their *price*.

* The name of the street in which the Paisley Theatre was situated.

When the play-folks came on 'twas a scene quite delightin';
 All the ladies for love—all the gemmen for fightin';
 And 'twas like a *review day*, with guns and with drums,
 When the brave Covenanters met Clavers' dragoons.

There was one call'd the Major, a thorough-bred soldier,
 Our major himself couldn't look a bit bolder;
 When they ask'd him to yield, how the chap did refuse,
 And swore by his *sole* he'd first eat his old *shocs*.

There was Burly so brave—I might SAY MORE* of him—
 And Harry, who strove the fair Edith to *win*,
 And Clavers, to whom no shot could do evil,
 For his life, we are told, was insured by the devil.

There was *Cuddie*—a comical, queer-looking ehie!,
 Who in love, war, or ploughing, ne'er flinch'd from the fiel',
 Except when at Jenny's he popp'd in his nose,
 And got his love *cool'd* by the *heat* of her brose.

There was Edith, sweet lady, who had the misfortune
 To tumble in love with the gay Harry Morton,
 And Jenny her servant, a braw Scottish lass,
 Wha was woo'd by a *Cuddie*, yet thoct him nae *ass*.

Auld Mause bad her son 'testify' at the halter,
 But Cuddie, mair wise, testified at the altar:
 He follow'd the steps of his master, brave lad—
 And the one wed the mistress, the other the maid.

But 'twould take too much time both for you and for me
 To tell all the wonderful scenes I did see;
 And, as we turn out by to-morrow's first light,
 I must march to my quarters—so I bid you good-night."

Having traced the subject of our narrative throughout his short but somewhat eventful life, and, with a copious sprinkling of his poetical productions, afforded the reader the means of judging of their merits, we have no hesitation in saying that Goldie gave promise of attaining, had a greater number of years been allotted to him, a high standing among the literati of his country. Comparing the later with his early effusions, a decided improvement is conspicuous. As the conductor of a public journal, he dis-

* *Seymour*—many years manager of the Theatre-Royal, Glasgow—enacted this character.

played sound sense and good taste. In private life he was a very amiable and well-conditioned individual ; and we have the authority of those acquainted with him for saying, that he was in every way estimable as a sincere friend and an agreeable companion. Happy himself, when the pressure of adverse circumstances did not weigh him entirely down, he delighted to see every one glad-some around him ; and, so far as his limited means permitted, the destitute were ever sure of his sympathy. He was not merely sentimental as a Poet, but had a truly open hand and a warm heart. His personal appearance was highly favourable—stout, and rather above the middle size—with a countenance indicative of intellectual culture and benevolence. It was with good cause that the worthy John Mayne remarked, when Goldie offered to show him the Rev. Mr Cuthill's letter, that "his own appearance was the best letter of introduction."

JOHN GOLDIE,

THE POETIC SEAMAN.

JOHN GOLDIE, the namesake and half-brother of the individual whose memoir has just been closed, was born in the Mill Vennel of Ayr, about the year 1788. He was consequently the senior of the two by a considerable number of years ; but being of illegitimate birth, he enjoyed few of the advantages which fell in early life to his more fortunate relative. He was brought up by his mother, who afterwards became the wife of a person of the name of Templeton ; and though her maternal kindness was probably all that could be expected in her circumstances, yet as his father interested himself little in his welfare, few cheering gleams may be said to have lent their aid in dispelling the gloom by

which his march in the morning of life was surrounded. His education was comparatively neglected; yet, naturally clever, he appears to have imbibed instruction with intuitive aptitude, and to have acquired information as the wild bee gathers honey, in a desultory yet not inefficient manner. To roam, free and uncontrolled, was the chief delight of his boyish years. Much of his time was spent at Monkwood Grove, possessed by Mr James Smith,* a well known botanist in Ayrshire, with the members of

* The following notice of Mr Smith is from the *Ayr Observer* of the 24th September 1839 :—

“ MR JAMES SMITH,

The Veteran Botanist of Monkwood Grove.

At the Horticultural and Agricultural Exhibition, in the Assembly Rooms, on Tuesday last, a landscape painting, the production, we believe, of the Hon. Roger Rollo, and intended as a present to the Society, attracted considerable attention at the end of one of the apartments. The picture, in itself well-executed, displaying innumerable varieties of flowers and plants, drawn with great care from nature, was rendered still more interesting from the likeness introduced of Mr James Smith of Monkwood Grove, in the act of prosecuting his favourite botanical pursuits. Mr Smith, who has been located at Monkwood Grove for a period little short of half a century, is well known as a practical Horticulturist and Florist, and a man of general information and worth. The plants he has collected during that time, as may well be inferred, are both numerous and interesting; and we know that many of them, foreign as well as indigenous, are exceedingly rare and valuable.

The character of the venerable botanist is known, we dare say, to most of our readers; but we conceive some such public notice as the present due to his age and usefulness. He has, from his earliest years, been distinguished by peculiar enthusiasm in horticulture, and this with no mercenary view. A sincere and devoted admirer of the vegetable world, he has explored its wonders with an eye exquisitely discriminative of its beauties; and, secluded at his pleasant retreat of Monkwood Grove, he may be said to have spent the greater part of a long life exclusively in the study of botanical science. His manners partake of the guileless simplicity of nature's self; and his conduct has always been marked by genuine liberality and generosity of heart.

Some amusing anecdotes are told of his unwearied vigilance and the almost paternal affection with which he regards the floral progeny around him. In a clever little volume, published in 1822, entitled *A Pilgrimage to the Land of Burns*, the following graphic description of Monkwood Grove and its tenant is given :—

‘ As John was ending his rhyming *Recipe*, they came upon the pleasantest spot of woodland they had yet seen. The hawthorn and holly clustering together, while, here and there, handfuls of sunshine squeezing through the luxuriant foliage, and dancing upon the delicate wood flowers, formed a spot of such solitary sweetness, that the schoolboy had instinctively looked about him for the nest of the blackbird, or

whose family, some of them about his own age, he was on terms of the closest companionship. Nor were the friendships formed at this juvenile period forgotten in after life.

Young Goldie, however, was not altogether without the elements of education. He was placed by his mother at the free school of the town, where he obtained an imperfect knowledge of English reading, and a slight practice in penmanship. Beyond this, he was little indebted to the pruning and enlightenment of

straying lovers had settled upon, as a proper sanctuary for breathing tenderest vows in. A little onward, a well of water, slumbering in crystal purity, at the root of a huge holly, interestingly companioned with its narrow red line of winding footpath, announced to our pilgrims the vicinity of a cottage, the inhabitant of which Mr L[amb] described as a most ingenious and amusing character: a few steps brought them to its door, and a halloo from Mr L[amb] soon brought its inmate before them.

‘ He was a middle-sized man, with the look of one halfway through the world, or rather halfway through life, as he had no marks of the world upon him. His features were of a Romish cast, high and thin, and each point thereof was tipped with active intelligence; not, however, that dry critical kind of it, before which one feels the necessity of putting a bar and steelyard upon the utterance, that each word may be weighed in its passage; but that frank communicative knowledge, before which the thoughts run rompishly loose.

‘ They soon discovered him to be a most zealous and enthusiastic botanist. His garden, or nursery, seemed cut out of the bowels of the wood, like the settlement of an American backwoodsman, and his cottage stuck in the middle thereof, like a large white gourd or pumpkin, swelling among its green leaves. Indeed, his premises might, with great propriety, be called a vegetable hotel; for there natives of all nations were seated most brotherly together, drinking of the same dews, and dancing to the piping of the same breeze.

‘ An anecdote they had from this amiable planter, is of itself sufficient to illustrate the excellent qualities of his heart. A brown beech, and one who was a chief among his tribe, had at one time thrown his arms so wantonly abroad, as to shadow and injure considerably several others of a different family that grew within his reach. After deliberating upon the extent of those extending injuries, he condemned him to the axe, saying, “Why cumberest thou the ground?” Taking up his instrument of execution, he went forth to finish his award; but when he came to where the noble spoiler stood, waving away in all his brown majesty, like Balaam before the encampments of Israel, he had not power withal to lift his hand. Evil reports, however, thickening against this vegetable invader, he again sallied forth, and again returned as before. At last, when further forbearance had stamped him tyrant to the oppressed, he rushed forth at full speed, that his purpose might not cool—shut his eyes when he drew near—groped his way to the offender’s trunk, and, ere he opened them, gave him a few irreparable gashes; then slowly, with a sigh to each stroke, finished the work of justice.

‘ They found, however, that this uncommon affection for the green tribes of the

learning. Nor are we aware that he was greatly given to reading ; but he naturally possessed a lively imagination, and had the faculty of turning to advantage whatever useful might present itself in the course of his wayward pursuits. Though much of his time was spent at Monkwood Grove, where a bias might have been formed in favour of the more peaceful occupations of the garden or the field, Goldie had always entertained a latent predilection for the sea ; not so much perhaps because he preferred the life of a sailor on its own account, but that it best accorded with his love of adventure, and promised to gratify his desire of seeing foreign lands. He longed to become another Anson or Cook ; or peradventure it might prove his fate to realize the romance of Robinson Crusoe, whose destiny on the Island of Juan Fernandez, he had often pictured, and, in his boyish enthusiasm, wished it had been his.

On attaining his fourteenth year, full of romantic imaginings, Goldie took the preliminary step in the career he had chalked out for himself, by engaging as an apprentice on board a coasting

earth was not incompatible with a disposition obliging and free, to such an excess, that to praise a plant was most positively to possess it ; accordingly, they might have carried off, had their stowage and hearts allowed them, loads of his fair families. As it was, they accepted, with thanks, as a most appropriate present to bear from Doonside, a young sensitive plant.*

The foregoing anecdote, exhibiting a noble feature in the character of the patriarchal botanist, is, we believe, strictly authentic. Since the *Pilgrimage* was penned, Time, which 'changeth ever,' has effected many revolutions, but what was perhaps least of all to be expected, the botanist of Doonside, we understand, is about to relinquish—voluntarily to relinquish—his 'white pumpkin, swelling among the green leaves,' whose walls have become so thoroughly endeared to him by upwards of forty years' habitation. The orchard, and the nursery, and the plants, so long pruned and nurtured by his hand, are all to be parted from !

The resolution of breaking up his 'vegetable hotel'—where 'natives of all nations' have so long drunk of the same dews, and danced to the 'piping of the same breeze,' as the *Pilgrimage* so poetically describes it—was not adopted, we may be assured, without a keen mental struggle. The man whose sympathetic feelings compelled him to shut his eyes while felling the *brown beech*, could not be supposed capable of giving up the home and loved pursuits of a lifetime without regret. Advancing years, however, coupled with the advice of his friends, have confirmed him in his determination ; and it gives us much pleasure to know that the opportunity will not be lost by his acquaintances in testifying their esteem for his character, and their sense of his disinterested and valuable labours as a botanist."

vessel belonging to the port of Ayr. As if Fortune had a mind to gratify his aspirations for the miraculous, it is told that on "going aloft" for the first time, he lost his hold, and fell headlong from the topmast. In descending, however, he luckily caught hold of a rope, and to the surprise of every one, alighted undismayed on his feet on deck, without injury, save the chafing sustained as the rope passed quickly through his "glowing hands." From the spirit displayed by the young tar on this occasion, he immediately became a favourite with all on board, and it was prognosticated that he would yet be a brave and good seaman.

Our information is not so precise as to trace the "mariner Poet" throughout the subsequent events of his life with any thing like circumstantial accuracy or connexion. Almost none of his papers have been preserved; and though many still live who were intimately acquainted with him, few know more than a vague outline of his chequered career. All agree in stating that he was universally esteemed among his shipmates, not less from his kind and obliging disposition, than from the buoyancy of spirit and genuine humour for which he was remarkable; while his rude attempts at poesy, even when a boy, frequently levelled with satiric aim, gave him a reputation for intellect far above his compeers. Attaining the years of manhood, Jack retained all the prominent characteristics of his boyhood. He still continued of the same happy, reckless, generous disposition. In every respect the thorough seaman, the figure of Goldie was remarkable even among his cast. Rather under than above the middle size, he possessed at the same time long swinging arms, and rolled with indescribable motion as he walked.

Another anecdote told of Goldie while in the coasting trade, is admirably illustrative of his coolness and contempt of personal danger. In crossing the Irish Channel on one occasion, in a gale of wind and a foaming sea, he was swept over board by a wave, and every one imagined he was lost. But Jack had yet more to do in the world. The vessel was "brought to" with all speed, and, to the joy of his companions, he was seen buffeting the waves, supported by some substance not distinguishable in the distance. On nearing the ship, a rope was thrown to him, of which he laid

hold, and would have been instantly pulled up ; but, in no hurry, Jack wished to secure the instrument of his preservation ; and having coolly adjusted the rope, he was at length drawn safely on deck, when the object of his solicitude was found to be of no greater value than the ship's galley, which had been washed away at the same time with himself. Such instances of hardy indifference gained him the highest respect, while his never-failing store of humour rendered him the source of amusement among all with whom he happened to be associated.

At what period Jack's love of the Muse began to develop itself, we can form no conjecture. It had grown upon him imperceptibly from his boyish years. Unfortunately his effusions were never collected ; and the few that are preserved live chiefly in the memory of his acquaintances, or in stray manuscript copies, noted down from oral repetition. One of his poems, entitled "The Deil's Burial," created considerable noise in Ayr at the time. It was written about twenty years ago, and is a curious record, the names of most of the notable inhabitants of the burgh being woven into verse. Jack was a narrow observer of character, and his knowledge of the locality enabled him to work up the group with inimitable discrimination. The poem has little plot, the point of the satire lying in the select assemblage of mourners brought together to join in the funeral solemnities. To those unacquainted with the characters introduced, the piece of course possesses much less interest :—

“ What dreadfu' news is this they tell,
 Nae doubt ye'll a' hae heard o't ?
 Rab Goudie* says they've kill'd the Deil,
 And swears to ev'ry word o't.
 Ane Robison,† a noted Whig—
 We a' hae heard him brawlin'—
 Has seized the gospel gun sae big,
 An' left the foe a-sprawlin'
 In the street this day.

* Letter-carrier to the post-office, and a well-known vender of news. He died a few years ago. His son fills the situation.

† The Rev. Mr Robertson, of the anti-burgher meeting-house, Kilmarnock. He was an eccentric individual, though esteemed a great preacher.

Auld Clootic, like a hutch o' coals,
 Lay streekit at his feet,
 Gied twa-three horrid eldrich squeels,
 Sine lay as deaf's a peat ;
 When Andrew Hunter, * daun'ring hame,
 Just at the time he fell,
 Roar'd out—' Od, blast your sooty saul,
 You'd better been in h—
 Than here this day.

The Dysters' Deacon † he cam' up,
 An' sair, sair, did he greet ;
 He's ta'en the corpse to his best room
 Till a' the frien's wad meet.
 Wi' burial letters, seal'd in black,
 He sent his man, Will, roun' ;
 Himsel' to buy a winding-sheet
 To Menzies's ‡ gade down,
 Right vext that day.

Rab heard his tale, and swearing said,
 He ne'er wad use his frien' sae ;
 Synce bad him just gae back again
 An' buy't frac burgher Lindsay. §
 The Deacon left him in a huff,
 Telt Lindsay o' his seoffin' ;
 Says he, ' Gude faith, ye'll get the claith,
 Gif our clerk || gets the coffin
 To mak' this day.'

Says the Deacon, ' there's my wauket loof
 I winna put it by him ;'
 He sent his man along the brig
 That same nicht to employ him ;
 He bad him mak' it just the size
 O' muckle Will M'Clymont, ¶
 And gart him send for Painter Waite, **
 To paint his name and age on't,
 In style that day.

* A half-witted person, who bore the cognomen of "Bowsy." He was in the habit of swearing very roughly.

† Deacon Parker, a respectable person in his way.

‡ The late Robert Menzies, draper, New Bridge Street.

§ Also a draper, and a man of much sanctity.

|| William Anderson, carpenter. He was not unfrequently termed the "Bill Renewer," from his extensive dealings in credit.

¶ William M'Clymont, shoemaker. He was a person of great bulk and stature.

** William F. Waite. He was an excellent tradesman, but very eccentric.

When Coachie Boyd * had heard the news
 He caper'd like a fairy,
 Danced down to Cooper Milliken's †
 An' telt him a' the story.
 The cooper flang his hat roof-high,
 Sine curst their Whiggish manners ;
 The very boync that he had made
 He dash'd it a' in flinners,
 In rage that day.

Will Duncan, ‡ at the Whitelet's toll,
 A holy, sober man,
 Whenc'er the letter he had read
 Flang donn his spade an' ran.
 A cabbage stock he just had raised,
 That weigh'd nineteen Scotch pun's.
 Was sent in to the Cross o' Ayr,
 And selt for bread an' buns
 To eat that day.

When auld Bankhead § got word that they
 Had put the coffin by him,
 He caper'd, danced, and sigh'd, and pray'd,
 And maist fell to the cryin'.
 He vow'd he ne'er wad touch the corpse,
 He was sae sair affrontit ;
 The very wood he had prepared,
 Flung in the fire and brunt it,
 In wrath that day.

John Adams next and I——||
 Cam' frae the far Townhead,
 The tears were happin' doun their checks
 Like ony amber bead.
 John Gibb ¶ and honest saddler Brown
 Were set for twa door-keepers ;

* So called, from his father having been a coach-builder. He was connected with the Ayr Customs, and a person of respectability.

† The cooper was a hard-drinking, merry fellow. His cooperage, situated on the quay, was a general *houf* for seamen, most of whom were fond of spinning a yarn with Cooper Milliken.

‡ A well known gardener.

§ Bankhead was a zealous anti-burgher. He nevertheless courted his second wife before the first was dead. On one occasion, he was caught by the minister in a *lecto-a-lecto* with his intended, when he excused himself by saying that he was "just clearing up some dark points to the bit thing."

|| Both plaiding manufacturers.

¶ Tailor.

And they let A—— C—— in,
 For he had on his weepers,
 Right white that day.

Park and M^cKinlay * next cam' up,
 Wi' twa-three Newton weavers ;
 The Deacon rose and kick'd them out,
 An' ca'd them unbelievers.
 Park flew into a dreadfu' rage,
 And said he firmly hoped
 To see his pats, his yarns, an' vats
 Ta'en to the Cross and roup'd,
 Some market day.

James M—— cam' along the brig,
 And R—— by his side ;
 James swore he had na been sae vext
 Since the day he lost his bride.

* * *

Will Anderson now cross'd the brig
 Wi' his man Robin Neil,
 An' naething for the kist wad tak',
 Since it was for the Deil.
 Lang skipper Jock † cam' up the gaet
 Wi' the mortcloth in a pock ;
 He gat it frae the *Butcher's Club*, ‡
 For brawly they kenn'd Jock
 Was vext that day.

* Both weaver's agents.

† The author's own father.

‡ Captain Goldie was not originally brought up to the sea, having been a butcher in early life—a business to which he owed the cognomen of “Scant,” much more familiar to him than his Christian name. It arose from “seant o' creesh”—an expression invariably used by him when examining cattle, to denote their inferiority of condition. “Scant Goudie” hence became an appellative which ever afterwards adhered to him. Nor was this applied so much in derision, as from a spirit of familiarity, common to most small towns, but nowhere more prevalent in former times, and even still, than among the worthy denizens of Ayr, few of the inhabitants, however wealthy and high, being without some distinguishing *sobriquet*. Captain Goldie was a man of respectability in his sphere, though perhaps somewhat undervalued as a seaman by those who considered themselves “thorough bred” sons of Neptune. Illustrative, we suppose, of his indifferent seamanship, it is told, that one blowy night, with a heavy *fresh* in the river, his vessel broke from her moorings, and was carried fairly out of the harbour. Having “brought her to” behind the south wall, he caused the bower anchor to be unshipped, exclaiming, as he heard it plunge into the tide, “There!—snuff at that you *old b—h*!” Unfortunately, however, no cable was attached; and, long ere morning, the ship was driven on shore, having sustained considerable damage.

Frank Nicol, Hawthorn, Barber Lees,*
 Cam' staucherin' up frae Mallic's
 In blacken'd weeds, as drunk's ye please,
 For they were hired for saullies.
 M'Hutcheon's † baker boys cam' next,
 Wi' basketfuls o' bakes ;
 An' twa o' Deacon Dickie's men
 Brocht up the stools and spakes,
 Right black that day.

The hour was now approaching fast,
 An' mony an idle servant
 Was gatherin' roun' about the door
 To see the Deil's interment.
 The *friend's* ‡ they a' cam' flockin' in
 As fast as Willie bade them ;
 They were obliged to steek the door,
 The house wad hardly haud them,
 'Twas sac cramm'd that day.

Then cam' Black Jock an' Johnnie Baird,
 Doun frae the far Mill Vennel,
 Pate Paterson § to say the grace,
 Wi' drucken Johnnie Donnel ;
 His wife cam' stampin' after him,
 Like ony Maggy Howe, ||
 An' cursed him to come out frae 'mang
 Sic an ungodly crew, *
 As them that day.

* * *

Wee Grocer Gibb ¶ neist waddles up,
 Like some fat goosy-gander,

* Bungo Lees, as he was called, was a well-known knight of the strop.

† The late Mr M'Hutcheon, baker.

‡ It is the practice to invite the *friends* or relations, and those connected with the deceased, into the house, to partake of a refreshment prior to moving the body.

§ Peter Paterson, tanner, a member of the Antiburgher congregation. He was a keen curler and a good hand at draughts. It is told that he once took horse to Glasgow to contest a game with a celebrated player there, and was worsted after a protracted trial. When on his way home, pondering over his defeat, it occurred to him that he had discovered the error which had led to that catastrophe ; and though then in the middle of the Mearns Moor, about twelve miles distant, and near midnight, he wheeled about his horse, returned to Glasgow, and had the satisfaction of carrying away the palm of victory. He lived to a great age, and was much respected.

|| The heroine of Wilson's poem of "Watty and Meg."

¶ Wee Grocer Gibb was a person little short of twenty stone weight.

Tak's aff his hat, and in the pass
 Fa's owre young A——.
 The wean roar'd out, till at the Cross
 Ye nicht ha'o heard the screech o't ;
 Wha think ye cam' to its relief
 But slater II—— II——,
 Right fou that day.

The merchants a', baith up and down,
 Were fast their windows steekin',
 An' pushin' up to see the fun,
 In crowds a' het and reekin' ;
 E'en hardware David barr'd his door,
 To show that he was civil ;
 Put on his new-soled shoon, and sent
 The profits to the Devil,
 For him that day.

An' skelpin' up like some race-horse,
 Few there were rinnin' harder,
 Fa's in at Gilbert Hazel's door,
 Wi' Jamie Sprent* the barber.
 Says Sprent, lad, ye may cock your nose
 An' swagger hame rejoicin' ;
 But, by my faith, before we part
 I'll gar ye wat my wizen,
 Wi' a gill this day.

Said David, whisky's unco dear,
 An' siller's grown sae scant now,
 Besides, I ne'er did Clootic fear,
 I'm turn'd owre great a saunt now. †
 I dinna drink till beastly fou,
 Gang hame an' clout the wife aye ;
 Nane can deny but that I've walk'd
 Quite *single-eyed* ‡ through life aye,
 Baith nicht an' day.

The crowds were dancin' roun' the door,
 Mad wi' sic thochts o' freedom ;

* Jamie was much given to drink, being often " fou for weeks thegither." His wife, who was a very industrious woman, and felt much affronted at his conduct, resolved on attempting at least a temporary cure on one occasion, by applying blisters to his feet while asleep, which had the effect of confining him to the house for several weeks.

† David was any thing but religious.

‡ He was blind of an eye.

An' ilka ane that popped in
 A hearty cheer they gied him.
 Claith Jamie now sends Andrew Lees
 To fetch a guard o' sodgers ;
 Or else John Sillars, * wi' his pike,
 To keep the crowd in order
 An' peace that day.

But they catch'd Robin Hamilton †
 Gawn up to see the sprec,
 An' gart him stan' an' sing a verse
 O' ' Oswald's Cavalry.'
 Rab roar'd the weel-kent ditty up,
 He was in sic a hurry ;
 But nobler game soon hove in sicht,
 For up cam' Archie Murray, ‡
 Maist fou that day.

* One of the town-officers and criers. John was rather a curious character. When half-seas over, his memory was exceedingly treacherous, and the wags of Ayr used to take undue advantage of his weakness. Like Paddy Weekes, who had so often sung the "Boys of Kilkenny" that he forgot it, John had frequently to apply to the bystanders to ascertain what he had been intimating ; and in this way he was repeatedly led into the most ridiculous blunders. As an instance, he was one night in the course of his rounds announcing "excellent hot mutton pies" at a certain bakery ; but forgetting the latter part of his advertisement, he had recourse to his usual prompters—"Eh, callans, what was I saying?" "Hot mutton pies, John," answered one of his audience, "*new hailed at the Water o' Doon foot!*" and so John went on amidst the laughter of all who heard him, quite unconscious of the slightest inaccuracy.

† Daft Robin Hamilton was a well-known individual. Several amusing anecdotes of him have found their way into the public journals. He was excessively fond of strong drink. It used to be said of him, that if a glass of whisky were put into a *stoupful* of water, he would swallow the whole to make sure of the infusion. "I wad drink it," he used himself to say, "an it war a mile te e boddom." A volume might be filled with stories about Robin. He had three songs, for aught we know of his own composing, which he used to sing for halfpence, or when compelled by the crowd, who frequently annoyed him. These were—"Oswald's Cavalry," in praise of the troop of yeomanry commanded by Richard Alexander Oswald, Esq. of Auchincruive ; "Blackguard Jamie Jellie," a small huckster in Ayr, who had incurred the ire of the mob on one occasion, by attempting to raise the price of meal at a period of great scarcity and dearth ; and the "Tailor catch'd a louse on his left shouder bane." It was truly amusing to hear Robin singing, with his hat invariably drawn over his eyes, his up-turned face puckered into a hundred wrinkles, and the hollow unmelodious sound of his voice, as he "seesawed" away, in keeping with the few modulations of which it was capable. Robin was extensively known throughout Ayrshire.

‡ Archibald Murray, another half-witted character, but more outrageous than Robin, and easily irritated.

* * *

The Deacon's house was cramm'd sae fou,
 Yet crowds were up still floekin',
 Till muckle Gibb was almost smoor'd
 And Johnnie Boyd was chokin'.
 Then Will Dunlop ran down the stairs,
 Changed berths wi' Gibb the tailor,
 An' clash'd the door richt i' the face
 O' W—— P—— the jailor,
 Wi' a daud that day.

Pate Paterson now rises up,
 Some mournfu' tale to tell,
 Put on an elwan-face, and said
 A grace as lang's hinsel'.
 An' clean caup out was now the toast
 O' ilka drink that comes ;
 An' mony a deadly gash was made
 In Willie Duncan's buns,
 Wi' their teeth that day.

Now a' the nabs in sable weed
 Are to the Maut Cross dashin',
 To walk in state an' meet the corpse
 Behint their frien' Hugh Wason.*
 Ilk vessel's flags, at half-mast head,
 The mournfu' tidings tell ;
 An' Mysie Duck † is sent wi' speed
 To ring the double bell,
 In haste that day.

[Here the Poet enumerates a great many of the officials and other chief men of the burgh.]

* * *

They now begin, like volunteers,
 To range themselves in order ;
 The magistrates were in the midst,
 The writers on the border.
 When Ebie Shaw, ‡ a frugal soul,
 For ever bent on hainin',
 Ran hame to change his hat and coat,
 In case it might be rainin'
 Or snaw that day.

* Sergeant Wason, another of the town-officers.

† Marion Duck, the bell-ringer.

‡ Ebenezer Shaw. He was a wealthy merchant, but very penurious.

The officers took aff their hats
 An' show'd their heads weel pouter'd,
 An', like the sergeant of the corps,
 Their crape an' halbert shouter'd.
 John Sillars, wha got bleezin' fou,
 Began to reel an' stutter,
 Gied Willio Kerr * a dreadfu' drive,
 An' laid him in the gutter,
 Wi' a clash that day.

Then Banker ——— roar'd out to get
 Twa constables wi' batons,
 Wha march'd John up the nineteen steps †
 To bide amang the rattons.
 John swore drink had na cross'd his craig
 Mair than the bairn's unborn ;
 An' aye's he stagger'd up the stair
 He curs'd wee shoon and *corns*
 For that, that day.

The nabs moved on an' met the corpse ;
 On reaching Hunter's Bank,
 They wheel'd about in marchin' style
 To join the mournfu' rank.
 The mob seem'd quite delighted,
 They thoct it famous sport,
 An' gied three hearty cheers as they
 Turn'd up the auld Kirk Port,
 In shouts that day.

They reach'd the grave in solemn pace ;
 An' gather'd roun' the coffin
 Were mony a saint wi' tearfu' eye,
 Though, faith, their hearts were laughin'.
 Then John M'Doul, ‡ wi' cautious han',
 The coffin did uncover ;
 It split ! an' Clootie jumped out
 Just like a flash o' pouter,
 In flames that day !

Then ilka anc, w' mettle heels,
 Was doun the Kirk Port skelpin' ;
 Some lost their hats an' shoon, an' some
 Wi' broken heels were yelpin' ;

* Also a town-officer, and very small of stature.

† The old jail, which was taken down in 1825, stood in the centre of the Sandgate Street. The steps which led up to the main door were nineteen in number.

‡ John M'Dowell, the gravedigger.

When John M'Doul had gather'd a'
 His spades and shools thegither,
 He cam' hin'most doun the Port, and said,
 ' The grave will do anither—
 Some ither day.'"

So closes the "Deil's Burial." Some passages which might give offence are kept out; but this does not mar the narrative, and the piece is sufficiently entire to be understood. Though there may not be a great degree of highly wrought humour in the verses, yet they are far from being despicable even in a poetic sense; and the manner in which the various persons are grouped together, is exceedingly characteristic.

In 1819, bent on an enterprise of some magnitude, Goldie sailed for Miramichi, in company with one of his old companions, Robert Smith, son of Mr James Smith of Monkwood Grove. What might be the precise design of their adventure was perhaps unknown to themselves. They were both actuated by a restlessness of temperament, ever seeking new objects of pursuit. Smith was, like his father, fond of botany, and devotedly attached to the study of nature generally. His predilections in this respect are well described in the following elegiac verses by his friend "Sailor Jack:"—

" Mourn, mourn, ilk sympathizin' frien',
 Let sorrow's tears fa' frae your e'en ;
 The qucerest shaver e'er was seen,
 I'll tak' my aith',
 Lies in below that sod sae green,
 Poor Robin Smith.

The half o' *terra firma* owre,*
 He trod in quest o' yerb an' flow'r ;
 Through ilka glen an' wud he'd cow'r,
 An' bye-way path ;
 But Death at last led to his bow'r
 Poor Robin Smith.

When father Adie was the laird
 O' Eden's ance delightfu' yaird,

* He had made a trip to America on a botanical speculation in 1817.

Weel may ye greet, an' yirm, an' bible,
 An' flee in wraith
 At Death, for witherin', like a stibble,
 Poor Robin Smith."

Arriving at Miramichi, Jack and his friend "Robin Smith" travelled from thence to Baltimore. Here the two companions parted, and they never again met. Smith struck farther into the interior, bent on his botanical researches, and was not afterwards heard of. There can be little doubt that Death, long ere this, has

" ————— Led to his bow'r
 Poor Robin Smith."

Jack entered himself on board a ship at Baltimore, and made a voyage or two from thence to South America. Here the tide of misfortune seems to have set fairly in against him. He was more than once wrecked, and had much difficulty in escaping with his life, losing every farthing of money and clothes belonging to him. During this period he corresponded pretty regularly with Mr John Smith, another of his early Monkwood associates, for whom he entertained all the respect and esteem of a brother. One or two of his letters are in our possession, but they do not keep up the connexion of events. He appears to have encountered many perils; yet, throughout all his hardships and ill luck, the native buoyancy of his spirit never seems to have forsaken him. In a letter, dated Monte Video, 5th June 1821, he states that he is "still in good health, but as unfortunate as ever." He had written previously from Rio de Janeiro, giving an account of a disastrous voyage in an American brig; and he now details the particulars of another, "as bad, if not worse:"—

" On the 12th of December 1820, I left Rio in the *Olive Branch* of London, bound for Lima. On the 25th,* being to the southert of the River La Plata, and the weather being still fine, all hands got drunk, and lost a man overboard. On the 12th of January (1821) made the Falkland Islands: on the 18th went through the Straits of La Maria. Here our captain got mad, and had to be confined in the cabin.....

* Christmas-day.

..... About the 20th, the weather became very cold and extremely bad—nothing but one gale after another. Disaster followed disaster, splitting sails, carrying away the rigging, &c. In short, there was not a bit of running rigging in her fit to hang a dog, nor a bit of new rope to replace it. About the 1st of February the captain got better; but, instead of being thankful, he returned with redoubled fury on the brandy bottle, and was scarcely ever sober. Never were men more deceived than all hands were by this infernal villain. All who knew him at Rio took him for a gentleman of the first stamp, and I myself took him for a saint.”

Jack then goes on to describe the storm they encountered—how the captain took shelter under the cabin table—and that, on the 29th February, when as far south as $60\frac{1}{2}$ south lat., they “shipped another tremendous sea,” which carried away all the “double bulwarks, rails, stanchings, and, in short, swept away every thing before it—stove the boats, and nearly buried the poor old cook under the ruins of his own house.” The weather moderating, they made up for Nassau Bay, in the Island of Terra del Fuego,* to get a fresh supply of water, the crew being then reduced to three pints each day. But Jack must be allowed to tell his own story:—

“On the 5th (March) made the Bay, and on getting in, had it not been for the good conduct of the owner, mate, and crew, mad Hannah (as we now called the captain) would have sold both the ship and our lives. About six p.m. saw two canoes coming off with six Indians in each, but they seemed uncommonly timorous; and it was not till we had hove a number of presents into their boats, that we got one of them to venture on board, but we could make him understand nothing. March 8, three more canoes came off with six natives in each. These did not seem to be so affrighted as the first, but came aboard fast enough. Of all the human race I have yet seen, these appear to be the most wretched. They had no arms nor clothes whatever, neither men nor women, but a bit of seal-skin laced round their bodies, all their upper and under works being quite bare. Nor did they look to be very hardy. Although they were painted all over, they came on board trembling and shaking with cold; and the cook had enough ado to keep them clear of his fire. In each canoe was a fire; and there the women and children sit hunkling around it. They would not allow one of their women to come alongside, but kept them paddling off in their canoes. We could make them understand nothing; but whatever we said or did they tried to imitate us.”

* Terra del Fuego (the land of fire), so called from the fires lighted up along the coast by the natives, when they saw the first navigators. The soil of the island is not favourable to vegetation, and the natives live chiefly by fishing. They are under no subordination or government; and their character is a compound of stupidity, indifference, and inactivity. The island is separated from the southern extremity of America by the Strait of Magellan.

After procuring a sufficiency of wood and water—nothing else could be had—and the captain having given up his commission, the owner, who was on board, taking charge himself, three different attempts were made to get round Cape Horn; but the storm was so great that they were compelled to bear up for Monte Video.

The next letter of the sailor-poet is from Valparaiso, October 10th, 1822. In this, as usual, he spins a long yarn, well calculated to interest his friends at home. It is retrospective, and though brief, fills up a few blanks in his history:—

“ Valparaiso, Oct. 10, 1822.

My dear Friend,—When I look back on the journal of my life, but more particularly on my last journal addressed to you, with the strange misfortunes that have befallen me, or rather the ship that I have been in, I am sometimes like to conclude that I am the Jonah. I will say nothing of my voyage in the *Jessie*—that was my own fault; as for my travels with Robert,* I regret it not. My voyage in the schooner *George* was what we call, in Scots, but an arle-penny of what was to come. My voyage in the *Nancy* and *Mary* of Boston, baffles all description. My journey from Philadelphia to Baltimore with only one dollar in my pocket, was also trying. But it is past, and all forgot. As to my voyage to Savannah, there was nothing remarkable in it, saving that all hands ran away but myself. My next trip was in the *Eugene* of Baltimore for Rio de Janeiro; from that to Monte Video, where we took in a cargo of mules. We were not five days at sea when we encountered a tremendous gale, sprung a leak, and put into Rio in great distress, with only 11 live mules out of 116. The ship was condemned, and sold for the benefit of the underwriters. I next shipped in the *Olive Branch* of London, bound round Cape Horn, [the particulars of which voyage he gives in the former letter. After buffeting Cape Horn for nearly three months, thirty-three days of which they had only one biscuit and a half, and a pound of fat pork in the day, they had to put back to Monte Video, where one of Jack's comrades died in his arms.] Two days after we got in here (Monte Video), we got a new captain, a new mainmast, and the ship a complete repair. Some say a bad beginning has a good end; but this had a *bad* beginning and a *worse* end. August 30th, 1821, being all ready for sea, we went out to the fairway, where we rode out two hurricanes. Every ship in the harbour drove, and some drove on shore. We lost two bower anchors and a kedgè; and, had not the Portugese frigate given us assistance, we might have been on the beach too. We had remarkable fine weather as far as Cape Horn; but, just as we opened the South Sea, we were taken in a squall, and laid nearly on our beam-ends; and for four weeks we buffed her at it, through heavy seas and excessive colds, till getting as far south as 61½, at last we got a fair wind and arrived at Callao Bay. Feb. 24, 1822, we made a trip to leeward for a cargo of corn, cotton, and firewood; but, on arriving at Callas, the poor *Olive Branch* was seized by

* His friend Robert Smith, the botanist.

a party of soldiers, and condemned, hull and cargo.* Not one of us had any idea of such things, else we might have secured our wages. The captain, who has also been a 'gouf ba' to Fortune, as he took leave of us and the ship, burst out a-crying. 'Poor Moll,' † said I, as I bundled my baggage over the gangway, without a single cross to bless myself with, 'you may take your pigs to another market now, for this is a settler to Jack.' By this job I have lost about 260 dollars. I was only three days on shore when I shipped as steward on board the *Chilina*, and have remained in her till now. Though I think less now about home than ever, yet I long very much to hear from you, and to learn how my friend Robert gets on. Give my best respects to Tell Molly, if she's not already spliced, to *sparem poco*. Since I began this, a letter has arrived from Callao. It informs us that Mr Richie and Captain Brogdan have great hopes of recovering the *Olive Branch*. If they succeed, you will soon hear from me again."

Unfortunate as he had hitherto been in his South American voyages, the tide of adversity had not yet reached the full; but, as the old proverb has it, when "things come to the worst they mend"—so it turned out with Jack. Shipwrecked, not one escaping but himself, the next letter discloses a happy change in his circumstances. We give the letter entire:—

“*Valparaiso, August 1, 1823.*”

Dear John,—It's an old saying, and it seems to be a true one with me, that it's an ill wind blows nobody good. I was drove out the *Olive Branch* by the force of patriot bayonets, without a cross to bless myself with, after having been twenty months on board of her. Three days after, I stepped as steward on board of a large ship called the *Messiah Chilina*, belonging to the house of Price and Montgomery. In her I remained nearly thirteen months. In her, my dear friend, I remained till she became a coffin for all that belonged to her but myself; and how I escaped, God only knows—sure it was a miracle. You will think so, too, when I tell you that the ship split, and I was twice nearly buried beneath the wreck. On the 9th of June last, about three a.m. our ship drove on shore, and at four a.m. not a timber-head of her was to be seen. The captain and two men were drowned. Three cats and two dogs were on board at the time; and, what is remarkable, not even one of them has been cast on shore. In this most tremendous gale, sixty-one sail of merchant ships drove on shore, and all but one sloop are totally lost. A great number of lives are lost. How thankful ought I to be, my dear friend, to that merciful Providence who has spared me so long beyond most of the companions of my youth; who has at this time snatched me from the jaws of death, and plucked me as a brand out of the burning! O how mercifully have I been dealt with! But a few days ago I had but one shirt to my back, and that so rent and torn with nails and floating pieces of the wreck, that it scarce deserved the name of shirt; yet I escaped unhurt, without a single scratch, and was able at daylight to go

* The war between Spain and the Republic was then at its height, and part of the cargo of the *Olive Branch* being Spanish, this occasioned the seizure.

† Jack's sweetheart, of whom more by and by.

down to the beach and witness many a poor fellow share the same fate as myself, though unable to give much assistance. I was taken into the owner's house, and have lived there ever since, as one of his own family. No doubt but you will think that I have got up three pair of stairs, and into (judges?) at last, when I tell you that I dined in the same house with General O'Higgins, the Supreme Director of Chili; nor don't laugh when you hear that I have doffed my tarpawling jacket, and become a wholesale merchant! To make a long story short, I have agreed to attend in the warehouse at 192 dollars a year, bed and board. This day a meeting in this house was held to purchase an English burying-ground, and there is some talk of building a church. Lima is taken by the Spaniards. This is all the news that I can give you. I would be very happy to hear from my old friend Robert. You may tell him that, amongst other misfortunes, I have lost my journal-book. In short, of all my losses, I regret this the most of all. I had carried it on since March the 19th, 1819. It was addressed to you, and written in such a style that every one that read it admired it. Every one said, Print it, Jack, when you get home, and it will make your fortune. It lies now buried under the sand, for not even a rag came on shore belonging to one of us. Give my best respects to your father and mother, if they are yet alive; as for old Thomas, his glass, to all appearance, was so nearly out before I left home, that I have no hope to see him in this world; but if Ann, his wife, is still living, give her my kind compliments. Likewise remember me to Mr and Mrs Goldie—to James and his wife. I hope she has got better of the toothach by this time. Be sure to make Robert write to me, and give me a whole history of his adventures. Tell him that I several times nearly mustered up the £50; but it always goes before I get it. I had about 150 dollars due me for the last ship, and 260 for the *Olive Branch*, but have not got a farthing yet for either. Be so good as remember me to Mr and Mrs Dick, and tell them all about it. Let me know if Miss Molly is off the stocks yet. By all the accounts that I can hear from home, I am just as well where I am yet. It is my earnest prayer that I may die in the land of my fathers, and be buried in the auld kirk-yard. Hame is aye hame. I was in Valparaiso when it was nearly destroyed by an earthquake. On that dreadful night I really thought Nature was going to make her last and grand exit. The rumbling noise beneath the sea, the ringing of ship's bells, the rattling of chain cables, were truly terrific. It was impossible to keep your feet on deck. In the space of seven minutes, about 200 souls perished, and most of the houses fell. Indeed, when I looked to the shore, covered with a white cloud, I did not think there was a soul left upon it. Adieu, my dear friend. I remain yours sincerely,

JOHN GOLDIE.

Write by return of post, and direct to me, at or in the house of Price and Montgomery, Valparaiso."

How long Jack remained in his new situation as a "wholesale merchant," we have not the means of knowing. The above is the last of his letters that have been preserved. Though "hame is aye hame," and anxious as he was to revisit his native land, Goldie had not yet, it appears, seen enough of the world, or suffered enough to cloy his love of adventure; for the next trace we

find of him is in the East Indies, engaged in the Burmese war. He had either entered or been pressed into the British navy, and was present at the taking of Rangoon in 1824. The following extract from one of his letters at this time appeared in the *Ayr and Wigtonshire Courier* of the following year:—

“ Rangoon, June 2, (1824.)—The orders of the Bengal fleet were, that every ship was to make the best of its way to Port Cornwallis, in the Andamans, and there to rendezvous till the whole of the ships from both Presidencies of Bengal and Madras were collected. Our little bark had a good passage till we came to the Great and Little Acre Islands, where we were becalmed for five days before we could get round Jackson’s Ledge, and other reefs of coral rocks, to enter the harbour of Cornwallis. We saw scarcely a ship all the way, and had no great amusement beyond catching dolphins, bonitas, &c., and watching the shoals of porpoises performing their rude gambols on the surface of the deep. When we neared our destination, we saw first a sail or two, then three or four, and so on, till the whole ocean was clothed with white canvass; and we concluded at first that it was our brethren, but the strangers proved to be our Madras friends; and it was one of the finest sights in the world to see the combined fleets of large transports, filled with armed men, and all sails set from the mainsail to the royals, beating into the noblest harbour you can conceive, and every ship endeavouring to get to windward of each other. We arrived on the 3d May; but I must not dwell at the Andamans, except to say that the scenery is the grandest and wildest I have ever seen, and that I boated round every bay and creek, and island and inlet in the harbour. We bade adieu to the savage cannibals of those islands on the 5th, and reached Rangoon River on the 11th, about ten o’clock a.m., the whole fleet of transports, and his majesty’s ship *Liffey*, a frigate of 50 guns, commanded by Commodore Grant, the *Larne* sloop of war, Captain Marryatt, and the *Sophy* brig of war. We had not gone far up the river before the gallant Burmese, without waiting any preliminaries, poured in a fire from one of their batteries upon the frigate, and so on all the way up to the town of Rangoon—every ship having to run the gauntlet as she sailed by about a dozen of these petty batteries. They did no execution, and their shot all fell short, or else the guns burnt priming. All the transports returned the fire as they passed the batteries. At length, about half-past one, the frigate anchored midway in the river, exactly opposite the town, and abreast of their principal battery, the village of Dahia, a large straggling place being on the other side of the river; she immediately poured in her broadside, first on the starboard, and then on the larboard; and in the course of a few minutes the whole town and river were enveloped in smoke. The inhabitants, poor wretches, to the amount of 30,000 or thereabouts, were driven out in about three hours, and in the evening our troops, European and native, landed. But the Burmese are beaten, not conquered; and now, in the height of the rains, they have stocked themselves in every direction round Rangoon, shoot our sentries, and harass our troops in every way. We have carried their strongholds on every occasion, but they return from their impenetrable forests, and build them up again; and unless the king of Ava gets frightened—the system of government is so completely feudal—the war will last a long time. Rangoon is built entirely of wood and surrounded with a wooden wall,

composed of thick beams 25 feet high. Their pagodas are magnificent, built of brick, and gilt from turret to foundation stone, so that when the sun shines they look like, and indeed are, pyramids of burnished gold."

At the termination of the war in 1826, Goldie found his way home with a considerable sum of money in his pocket, resolved to spend a few months on shore in revisiting the haunts of his early youth—amongst others, not forgetting Monkwood Grove—and in the society of his friends. The death of his brother, the editor of the *Paisley Advertiser*, had occurred only a short time before; an event at which he was exceedingly grieved. As an instance of the sincere affection entertained for his relative, he deposited the chief part of his savings in the hands of a friend who had taken into his family one of Mr Goldie's children—a promising boy of about five years of age—with the view of bringing him up, on the understanding that if any thing befell the donor, the money should be expended in educating his little nephew.

Jack had entertained the notion of getting "spliced;" but Molly, who was handsome, and much younger than himself, wed another, and he once more resolved on going to sea. Having been several months inactive, and being at best not very provident, he drew on the deposit with his friend rather frequently. Trade, too, was dull at the time; and he found much more difficulty in obtaining a ship to his mind than he expected. Tired out at length with "inglorious ease," he made a purchase, in partnership with another seaman, of a small craft, intending to trade along the coast, occasionally visiting the shores of Arran and Kintyre. The boat had been laid aside for some time, and was considered scarcely sea-worthy; but, though cautioned against such a precarious speculation, Jack was not to be swayed. He would make the trial, and "sink or swim" with her. Poor fellow! he perished in his first trip. He sailed from Ayr with a cargo of coals for Campbelton, in the autumn of 1827, after which neither he nor his companion were ever heard of. It is believed that the frail bark sprung a leak, or perished in a squall; and thus "sailor Jack," who had outlived so many tornados in all quarters of the world, did not realize his wish that he should be "buried in the

auld kirk-yard," but found a watery grave in the very eye of that "native home" which he had so much prized in his wanderings. This adventurous mariner deserved a better fate. Though uncouth in his appearance and manners, he concealed under a rough exterior a warm heart and an honourable spirit. His little nephew and namesake, in whom he was so much interested, did not long survive him.

Several poetical pieces, besides the two already given, were composed by "sailor Jack;" among others, "Death and Davie L——"—"Ode to a Haggis"—"Lines to a Swallow," &c.; but the only one in our possession is his "Last Will and Testament," written, as it sets forth, on board the Hon. East India Company's frigate *Hastings*, on the 25th June 1825, together with his Epitaph, composed by himself. The Will and the Epitaph run as follows, some words which have been obliterated in the manuscript being conjecturally supplied by us:—

“ THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN GOLDIE, SEAMAN.

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

Be't known to all concern'd to know,
 To old and young, to high and low,
 To all around the burgh of Ayr,
 That I, John Goldie, do declare :
 I'm sound in reason, so in health,
 Sufficient to dispose my wealth.
 For ever praised be God above
 For all his goodness, truth, and love.
 It has been said by saints and sages,
 Life's like a dream in all its stages ;
 To-day we see the strong and able,
 To-morrow like the wither'd stubble.
 When Age and Frailty, wrinkled hags,
 Stare in my face and make their brags,
 That I must soon give up the claim
 Of health and pleasure unto them ;
 When at their heels is driving fast
 An awful figure, grim and ghastr,
 Will lay the mighty low at last ;
 In war, when life is so precarious,
 When death is seen in shapes so various,
 That I be ready for the worst ;
 Be't known to all, again, that first—

That nought my dying hour may mar,
 By sickness, accident, or war—
 My precious soul to Him who gave it,
 I recommend, and willing leave it,
 Surely the cord of life is brittle,
 It's lot I mind it not a spittle.
 That my effects be justly served,
 And giv'n to them who best deserve 't,
 If Mr Boycs, third lieutenant—
 Because he's gentle, kind, and lenient—
 Will be his servant's executor,
 Among the first he'll get his mouter,
 On this condition if ho please—
 Upon the day of my decease,
 I leave him all my books and papers,
 Though little else than mad-brain'd vapours ;
 The birds and inscets, worms and snails,
 That I brought round from New South Wales,
 With all that's either odd or rare
 Within my chest, shall be his share.
 I next bequeath to Johnnie Harris,
 On board or shore, no matter where he's,
 A hundred and fifty white rupees,
 To spend them when and where he please ;
 My chest and clothes he'll have them all,
 They'll do to place against the wall.
 My wages due, as't does appear,
 In sterling money net and clear,
 Is forty pounds, not prize nor booty,
 For which I've strove to do my duty.
 In ancient Ayr, which none ' surpasses
 For honest men and bonnie lasses,*
 I have a brother beats me hollow ;*
 His mellow strains would charm Apollo ;
 And when he strikes the well-strung lyre,
 The very birdies catch the fire,
 And warble out with double glee
 Their little notes from tree to tree.
 Though only by the father's side,
 He is my glory and my pride ;
 And for his love in days of yore,
 When stern misfortune on me bore,

* His half-brother, a memoir of whom precedes the present notice. From him the sailor experienced many acts of kindness. The sentiments above expressed are creditable to both.

What things 'bout Ayr to me pertain
 He'll claim and keep them as his ain.
 I leave him twenty pounds to boot
 To buy himself a mourning suit ;
 The other twenty, for his use is,
 To heal and rectify abuses—
 To shield the wretched and the poor,
 And cheer them in a dying hour ;
 And if there's one can claim a plack
 He'll justly pay it out his whack.
 With forty merks in Spanish coin
 His coffer I intend to line ;
 They're now in Robert Richie's hand,
 He'll pay them on the first demand :
 And as I have a high opinion
 In favour of the Bethel Union,
 It is my will that he shall part,
 If its according to his heart,
 With five pound five—no great reduction,
 To save a race from self-destruction.
 O ! I could share my dear heart's blood
 With pleasure for the seaman's good ;
 So may the Lord, at my decease,
 Receive my soul in love and peace.
 I here subscribe, as I have told ye,
 My name and surname, Johnnie Goldie.

 ADDITION TO MY WILL.

If fate's decreed your servant humble
 Must o'er the foresheet have a tumble,
 He's most content, without a grumble ;
 He sees nae odds
 Whether filthy grubs his carcass mumble,
 Or sharks or cods.

Nae pray'rs or masses I'll ha'e chanted—
 We, Presbyterians, dinna want it ;
 But ae request, if ye'll but grant it,
 Close by the Aisle,
 A tub or eask, ye'll firmly plant it,
 Wi' guid strong ale ;

That ilka tar, they'll no refuse it,
 May get a sip, not to abuse it ;

JOHN GOLDIE.

Gie frien's and foes, an' a' that choose it,
 A hearty glass ;
 They'll mind the Bard wha lang did use it,
 Whiles to excess.

But if on shore I be interred,
 An Epitaph I ha'e prepared ;
 Ye'll scratch it on a slate or card,
 On stane or lead ;
 And whether in a field or yard,
 I winna heed.

 THE EPITAPH.

Sleeping here lies Johnnie Goldie,
 Death has hove him all aback ;
 In this house cold, dark, and mouldy,
 Johnnie lies a mournful wreck.
 What are now the storm's loud roarings !
 What to hear the clash of arms !
 Now he's fast in Death's strong moorings,
 Now he's free from all alarms—
 Till that morn, so big with wonders,
 In the universal wreck,
 'Midst the crash and roll of thunders,
 Dauntless there you'll see poor Jack.

And to this said Will and Testament I set my hand and seal, on board the Honourable Company's Frigate *Hastings*, on the 25th of June, and in the year of our Lord 1825."



L O C H Y A L E ,

R W. P. Smith, Lith.

JOSEPH TRAIN,

AUTHOR OF "STRAINS OF THE MOUNTAIN MUSE," &c.

MR TRAIN, though a Poet of no inconsiderable merit, is best known to the world by his correspondence with Sir Walter Scott, who greatly valued the assistance derived from his assiduous researches. In the works of Sir Walter, honourable mention is frequently made of Mr Train, in reference to the many literary and antiquarian favours received from him; and Mr Lockhart, in his "Life of Scott," fails not to acknowledge the services rendered, in terms due to their importance; but it remains for the biographer of Mr Train to elevate him still more prominently in the eye of the public, as one whose unostentatious labours have been chiefly expended in promoting the undertakings of others.

JOSEPH TRAIN was born in the village of Sorn, in Ayrshire, in 1779. His parents, who were in humble circumstances, removed about eight years afterwards to the county town, where, after completing his limited attendance at school, he was apprenticed to a mechanical occupation, by no means congenial to the feelings of a youth of his lively imagination, or accordant with that taste for literature which he appears to have acquired at an early age. Every hour he could spare from toil was sedulously devoted to mental improvement; and, before he had attained the years of manhood, he possessed a degree of information vastly superior to his position in society. To be the architect of one's own fortune is a high encomium; and, in thus alluding to the circumstances of our author's boyhood, we do so in a spirit fully appreciating the genuine worth of the man, whose merits and moral bearing rise superior to such obstacles as Fortune may have placed in his path to advancement.

In 1799, Joseph Train was balloted for the Ayrshire Militia, then about to be embodied in Ayr; and the stipulated time of

service being either three years or during the war, he served till, in consequence of the peace of Amiens, the regiment was disbanded in the spring of 1802, unknown and unnoticed beyond the credit which his orderly conduct secured for him. He, however, still found leisure to indulge in his favourite studies, and to pay occasional court to the Muse. While stationed at Inverness, he had seen the announcement of Currie's edition of the Works of Burns—originally printed at Liverpool in 1800—and ambitious to possess a copy, Train became a subscriber, resolving to save every sixpence he could spare for the purchase. The volumes having been duly forwarded to the bookseller, the Colonel of the regiment, Sir David Hunter Blair, happening to enter the shop one day, took up the work, and, expressing a wish to have it, was astonished when informed that the copy, price £1. 11s. 6d., was for one of his own men. Sir David inquired the name of the individual, and, on being informed, felt so much pleased, that he gave orders to have it bound in the best style, and delivered to Train free of expense.

Not satisfied with this mark of approbation, Sir David continued his kindness, convinced that the object of his attention was in every way worthy of it. On parting with Train as militiaman, he recommended him so particularly to the notice of Mr Hamilton of Pinmore, then an eminent banker in Ayr, that he soon procured for the Poet an agency in that town, for the extensive manufacturing house of James Finlay and Company of Glasgow. But Sir David resolving to interest himself still farther in the future fortune of his *protege*, in conjunction with the late Earl of Eglinton, and the present Lord Justice Clerk, then Solicitor-General, obtained for him an appointment in the Excise. This occurred in 1808. His first permanent settlement, however, did not take place until 1811, when he entered actively on the duties of his charge at Largs, after due qualification by previous instruction, and having been on service as a supernumerary in Perthshire for some time in 1810.

Burns was an exciseman, and wrote the best of his lyrics while in the service; still it must be admitted that the office is not the most eligible for the Muse. The Ploughman Bard felt this, and

no doubt so did Mr Train, though it afforded the latter innumerable opportunities of prosecuting those traditional and antiquarian inquiries, towards which the bent of his genius almost intuitively led him. Largs is a district of more than ordinary interest to the Scottish historian; and, rich in picturesque scenery, highly calculated to inspire the pen of the poet. Mr Train, in his boyish years, had become well acquainted with the middle portions of the county of Ayr, and his residence at Largs gave him a knowledge of the northern sections of it which he had not formerly the means of acquiring. In 1813, he was transferred to Newton Stewart; and, as his survey extended over the greater part not only of Upper and Lower Galloway, but also of Carrick, he found himself located in a circuit hitherto unexplored, and new to him in many particulars. "Few parts, even in the North Highlands of Scotland," says Mr Train in the manuscript from which we quote, "present a greater variety of savage scenery than that of the borders of Galloway and Ayrshire; and, with the exception of the store-farmers, who are generally shrewd and intelligent, the people's simplicity corresponds entirely with the wildness of the country." In this pristine district, Mr Train gathered many interesting traditions, illustrative of bygone days—of rites and superstitions at one period general over the country, but which in later times existed only where intercourse was limited and knowledge had been correspondingly slow in its progress. What use Mr Train designed to make of his gleanings appeared in 1814, by the publication of his "Strains of the Mountain Muse," consisting chiefly of metrical tales, illustrative of traditions in Galloway and Ayrshire, accompanied by interesting notes. This little volume was destined to give a permanent direction to the future researches of the author.

The poems were printed at Edinburgh; and, while in the press, Sir Walter Scott, having seen the announcement, and obtained a glance at the sheets from the publisher, immediately wrote to the author, whose address he also procured, requesting him to add his name to the subscription list for several copies. Flattered by this compliment, Mr Train made all haste to forward a copy to the distinguished Poet, accompanied by a letter,

thanking him for his kindness. To this Sir Walter replied as follows:—

“ TO MR JOSEPH TRAIN,
 Newton Stewart,
 GALLOWAY.

SIR,

I received your volume with the inclosure, just as I am setting out upon a pleasure voyage. I intend to make your book a companion of my tour, and I shall feel it a pleasant one, if the other poems, as I doubt not, bear a proportion of merit corresponding to *Elcine de Aggart*, in which I find only one faulty line. It is

‘ Or any whom they may refractory find.’

I wish you would revise something like this, as it would complete the picture of subjugation—

‘ They bring with them yokes for the neck of the hind.’

I don’t mean that as a good line, but it may suggest one having a special and direct idea, instead of a vague and general one, as it stands at present.

I am not at all acquainted with Galloway traditions and stories, and should be much obliged by any communication on these subjects. My return will be in about a month from this date, when my address is Abbotsford by Melrose.

I am, SIR,

Your obliged servant,

(Signed) WALTER SCOTT.

Abbotsford, 28th July 1814.”

An encouraging letter of this kind, from one occupying so high a place in the literature of his country as Sir Walter—though then only known to the world by his poetical works—was well calculated to inspire a newly fledged author with the highest hopes of success. The poem alluded to affords a very fair specimen of the “*Mountain Muse* :”—

“ ELCINE DE AGGART.

‘ Lang was she kent on Carrick shore,
 For mony a beast to dead she shot,
 And perished mony a bonnie boat.’

BURNS.

These stanzas are founded on a tradition still remembered in Ayrshire. When the Spaniards, in the year 1588, attempted to invade England, the ships which escaped the

vigilance of Lord Howard and Sir Francis Drake were overtaken by a violent hurricane ; and, as is well known, were wrecked among the rocks of the Hebrides, or on the western shores of Scotland. When some of them appeared first in the Clyde, it is reported that Elcine de Aggart, an old lady, who was honoured in Carrick with the title of witch, and who, it would appear, made no scruple in turning her skill in the black art to the advantage of her country in the hour of danger, seated herself upon a promontory, holding a ball of blue yarn in one of her hands, which may truly be called the thread of Fate, as by a mysterious application of it she was understood to have absolute control over the destiny of mortals, either individually or collectively, as she pleased. She had likewise, in common with other members of the same order, complete power over the elements ; so that, opposed to such a powerful opponent, it was impossible for the invaders to escape irretreivable destruction.

As the vessels bore up the Channel, the tempest increased, and the weird sister sung as follows :—

“ Why gallops the palfrey with Lady Dunure ?
 Who takes away Turnberry’s kine from the shore ?
 Go tell it in Carrick, and tell it in Kyle,
 Although the proud Dons are now passing the Moil,*
 On this magic clue,
 That in Fairyland grew,
 Old Elcine de Aggart has taken in hand,
 To wind up their lives ere they win to our strand.

That heaven may favour this grand armament,
 Against us poor heretic islanders sent ;
 From altars a thousand, though frankincense fly,
 Though ten thousand chapel-bells peal in the sky,
 By this mystic clue,
 Made in Elfland when new,
 Old Elcine de Aggart will all countermand,
 And wind up their lives ere they win to our strand.

They bring with them nobles our castles to fill ;
 They bring with them ploughshares our manors to till ;
 They likewise bring fetters our barons to bind,
Or any whom they may refractory find ;
 But this mighty clue,
 Of the indigo hue,
 Which few, like de Aggart, could e’er understand,
 Will baffle their hopes ere they win to our strand.

Was ever the sprite of the wind seen to lower,
 So dark o’er the Clyde, as in this fatal hour ?
 Rejoice ev’ry one may, to see the waves now
 Each ship passing o’er from the poop to the bow.

* The Cape of Cantyre is thus named.

With this magic clue,
That in Fairyland grew,
Old Elcine de Aggart has wound to an end
Their thread of existence, though far from the strand.

I sigh for their dames, who may now take the veil ;
For babes who the loss of their sires may bewail ;
But while the great death-bell of Toledo tolls,
And friars unceasingly pray for their souls,

With this mystic clue,
Made when Elfland was new,
Who will not give praise, in her own native land,
To Elcine de Aggart for guarding the strand ?

Come back on your palfrey my Lady Dunure,
Go bring back old Turnberry's kine to the shore ;
And tell it you may, over Carrick and Kyle,
The last ship has sunk by our good Lady Isle.

And while such a clue,
Of the indigo hue,
Old Elcine de Aggart has at her command,
A foreign foe never shall come to our strand."

Besides the foregoing, Mr Train's volume contained "The Funeral of Sir Archibald the Wicked,"* who died in 1710, and was notorious for the part which he took against the Covenanters. Among the notes appended to this poem, is the following singular story, upon which Sir Walter Scott afterwards founded the tale of "Wandering Willie," in *Redgauntlet*, which historical novel did not appear till 1824 :—

"In the persecution that succeeded the Restoration of Charles the Second, who vainly hoped, under the less offensive garb of prelacy, to restore the Catholic religion to its pristine splendour in this country, the hero of the foregoing poem (Sir Archibald) was no inferior actor. Many stories similar to those related of him are told of the most obnoxious of the persecutors, from which I have selected the following, recorded of the famous Grierson of Lagg, who, although represented by his contemporaries as having acted like a demon while upon earth, posterity allows to have performed one act of justice after his decease.

A man in the parish of New Abbey, who had the lease of a farm from the Laird of Lagg, called on him one day to pay a considerable arrear of rent which had been due ; Mr Grierson took the money, but not being able to write a receipt, desired the farmer to call next day, and he should have it ; but ere the sun rose again he had breathed his last. When the funeral was over, the poor man waited on the young laird, and

* Of Culzean Castle, now the seat of his descendant, the Marquis of Ailsa.

simply stated the transaction with his father. The young gentleman very plausibly informed him that, should he admit of such verbal declarations in lieu of vouchers, he might subject himself to impositions which the whole of his property could not cover; and although he doubted not but that he had spoken truth, yet without payment was made immediately, he would seek redress by legal measures. As the poor man was returning home very disconsolate, a person came up with him in a wood through which he had to pass. They travelled on in silence for some time, when the stranger observed that he appeared to be very low-spirited, and begged that he would inform him of the cause, as he might perhaps have it in his power to serve him. The farmer replied, that when he imagined he was in low spirits he was right; but that he was afraid no human aid could be of any service to him; but to gratify him, he would acquaint him with the whole cause of his melancholy; then told him his story, as before stated. The stranger observed that the case was a very singular one, but not so hopeless as he imagined, and said, that if he would go with him a small distance into the wood, he thought something might be done that would in a great measure obviate his present difficulty. It being near midnight, and very dark, the farmer startled at the proposal, and drew back, when his unknown companion assured him he had nothing to fear, and that, if he followed him, he would re-conduct him to the place where they then stood, in a very short time.

The farmer began to consider, that as matters then stood with him, no change could possibly be for the worse, and declared himself ready to proceed. His guide then dashed into the wood, with the mazes of which he seemed to be well acquainted. They soon came to the gate of a majestic castle, which was opened to them by a man who had been many years porter to the Laird of Lagg, but who had been dead several years. In the hall sat Patie Birnie, the famous fiddler of Kinghorn, tuning his violin, in order to play after supper to a large company, who were assembled in an upper apartment of the castle. As the farmer followed his guide, he saw several ladies and gentlemen, with whom he had been formerly acquainted, all of whom had taken a very active part in the persecution; at last he entered a room, where, to his utter astonishment, he saw Lagg seated at a table, with a large bundle of papers before him, and apparently busied in arranging them. His guide then addressed Lagg, and informed him that this was the person he had sent him for; upon which the Laird wrote a receipt for the money he had received on the day of his death, and gave it to the farmer, telling him he had only to go next day and present it to his heir, and inform him that he had received it when he made payment, but that it had escaped his memory. The farmer bowed, and returned with his guide, who soon placed him on his road, wished him good-night, and left him. The man went home in a state of mind not easily to be described; and next morning, when reflecting on the whole transaction of the preceding evening, considered it as a hideous phantasm of the brain, till, putting his hand into his pocket, he drew out a receipt, fairly written in the hand of his deceased landlord. His joy then knew no bounds; he instantly set off, and presented his voucher, which was received upon telling his story as directed. It only remains to be stated, that although the most diligent search was made, no castle could be discovered in the wood; nor had the oldest inhabitant of the neighbourhood ever heard of a house being either in the forest or in its parlieu, except the solitary cottage of a peasant."*

* Sir Walter, in one of his notes on *Redgarnlet*, accounting for the story told by

The other poems in "The Mountain Muse" were chiefly designed to illustrate the traditions and customs of a former age. "The Grave of Glenalmond" records the violent death of a soldier, after returning from foreign wars. "The Hag of the Heath" affords the author an opportunity of adverting to the popular superstitions of our forefathers, and of collecting in his notes a variety of interesting extracts. "Spunkie; or the Wan'er'd Wight, a Nocturnal Tale"—"The Peasant's Death"—"The Cabal of Witches"—"The Warlock Laird,"* &c., partake of the same character. Among the lyrical pieces, the song entitled "The Auld Thing O'er Again," as a picture of the warlike period at which it was written, is well worthy of preservation:—

“ Wi’ drums and pipes the clachan rang,
 I left my goats to wander wide;
 And e’en as fast as I could bang,
 I bicker’d down the mountain side.
 My hazel rung and haslock plaid
 Awa’ I flang wi’ cauld disdain,
 Resolved I would nae langer bide
 To do the auld thing e’er again.

Ye barens bold, whose turrets rise
 Aboon the wild woods white wi’ snaw,
 I trow the laddies ye may prize
 Wha fight your battles far awa’.
 Wi’ them to stan’, wi’ them to fa’,
 Courageously I crossed the main;
 To see, for Caledonia,
 The auld thing weel done o’er again.

Right far a-fiel’ I freely fought,
 ’Gaiust mony an outlandish loon;
 Au’ wi’ my good claymore I’ve brought
 Mony a beardie birkie down:

the blind fiddler, says, "I have heard in my youth some such wild tale as that placed in the mouth of the blind fiddler, of which I think the hero was Sir Robert Grierson of Lagg, the famous persecutor." But as the above story was given to Mr Train by his friend Captain Denniston, it is more than probable that Sir Walter had confounded what he read eighteen years before with the recollection of tales told him in his youth.

* The Laird of Fail. Many stories are told in Ayrshire of the magical powers of the Laird. The remains of his Castle, in Tarbolton parish, still exist.

While I had pith to wield it roun',
 In battle I ne'er met wi' ane
 Could danton me, for Britain's crown,
 To do the same thing o'er again.

Although I'm marching life's last stage,
 Wi' sorrow crowded roun' my brow ;
 An' though the knapsack o' auld age
 Hangs heavy on my shoulders now—
 Yet recollection, ever new,
 Discharges a' my toil and pain,
 When fancy figures in my view
 The pleasant auld thing o'er again."

Such is a specimen of the contents of the little volume which gave rise to the long-continued intimacy and correspondence between the author and Sir Walter Scott. Stimulated by the encouragement of his distinguished patron, Mr Train became still more eager in the pursuit of ancient lore ; and being amongst the first to collect old stories in Galloway, with a view to publication, he soon obtained such a reputation, to use his own words, that "even beggars, in the hope of reward, came frequently from afar to Newton Stewart to recite old ballads and relate old stories" to him.

The next letter from Sir Walter was in acknowledgment of various entertaining traditions forwarded by Mr Train, at the same time soliciting some information regarding the state of Turnberry Castle, the Poet being then engaged in composing the "Lord of the Isles." With what success Mr Train set about the necessary inquiries, having undertaken a journey to the coast of Ayrshire for the purpose, appears from the notes appended to Canto Five of that magnificent Poem, wherein is given a description of Turnberry Castle, the landing of Robert the Bruce, and of the Hospital founded by the deliverer of Scotland at King's Case, near Prestwick. Through the kindness of Mr Hamilton of Pinmore, Mr Train procured from Colonel Fullerton, one of the *mazers*, or drinking-horns, provided by the king for the use of the lepers, which he transmitted to Sir Walter. This interesting relic, much prized by the Baronet, was among the first of the many valuable antiquarian remains afterwards presented to him—the extensive collection of which now forms one of the chief attractions at Abbotsford. Much of the information communicated was wholly

new to Scott. In reply, he says—"Your information was extremely interesting and acceptable, particularly that which related to the supposed supernatural appearance of the fire, which I hope to make some use of. It gives a fine romantic colour to the whole story." To what purpose Sir Walter availed himself of the tradition, appears from the glowing description of the incident in the "Lord of the Isles:"—

" Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
Whose fairy glow beguiled their sight ?
It ne'er was known—yet grey-hair'd cild
A superstitious credence held,
That never did a mortal hand
Wake its broad glare on Carrick's strand ;
Nay, and that on the self-same night
When Bruce cross'd o'er, still gleams the light ;
Yearly it gleams o'er mount and moor,
And glittering wave, and crimson'd shore ;
But whether beam celestial, lent
By heaven to aid the King's descent ;
Or fire, hell-kindled from beneath,
To lure him to defeat and death ;
Or were it but some meteor strange
Of such as oft through midnight range,
Startling the traveller, late and lone—
I know not, and it ne'er was known."

The "Lord of the Isles" was published in the end of December 1814. In the course of the following month, Sir Walter wrote to Mr Train, apologising for delaying to thank him for his "kind and liberal communications," and intimating a desire to befriend him should it ever be in his power. "It would give me great pleasure," are the words of Sir Walter, "if at any time I could be of the least service to you. I do not mean as an author, for *therein the patient has always to minister to himself*; and I trust the success of your own labours will gratify you completely in that particular. But though I am not acquainted personally with any of the gentlemen of your Board, it is possible I might have the means, or make them, of forwarding the prospects which you may entertain of advancement; at any rate, I should most willingly try, if you are pleased to give me the opportunity at any time."

The interest thus manifested by Sir Walter in one with whom he had only recently become acquainted, was exceedingly creditable to his feelings, and must have been highly flattering to the subject of his solicitude. Mr Train, however, was not at this period in a position to benefit by his advances, having been only about seven years in the Excise, and of course not eligible to fill the situation of Supervisor—the next step in the ladder of promotion. He had, besides, the interest of Sir David Hunter Blair in his favour, which was greatly strengthened in consequence of the Marquis of Queensberry's brother, the friend of Sir David, having been at the time appointed one of the Commissioners of Excise. He was therefore not without influential patronage. We mention this, by no means in disparagement to Sir Walter Scott, but in justice to our author, to show that in his labours for the "Great Unknown," throughout a period of nearly eighteen years, he was actuated by no selfish or mercenary motive—"enthusiastic admiration of his transcendent genius" alone prompting to the toil. In reply, Mr Train thanked him for his friendly offer, stating the position in which he stood. Sir Walter afterwards called on Sir David Hunter Blair, at the Caledonian Hunt Club-Rooms in Edinburgh, and, inquiring into the early history of his correspondent, said, on parting, that "having taken him up as his *protege*, he would attend to his future advancement."

Not long after Mr Train was located at Newton Stewart, he formed an intimacy with Captain James Denniston, author of "Legends of Galloway," and editor of the ancient ballad of Craignilder. In conjunction with this gentleman, he formed the plan of writing a history of ancient Galloway; and the scheme was so far proceeded in, that printed queries were forwarded to every schoolmaster and parish clerk in the south of Scotland, as well as to several literary and antiquarian gentlemen with whom they were acquainted, requesting information on particular subjects of inquiry. As the circular was signed by Mr Train, the communications in reply were chiefly addressed to him; and in this way he added immensely to his knowledge of Gallovidian antiquities. Amongst other things he discovered the Synod

Book of Galloway, commencing in 1688 and ending in 1716, which had been lost for many years. By the information and assistance of Mr Wilson of Burnbrae, he was enabled to trace the great Roman Wall through Galloway for upwards of sixty miles; with the aid of Mr Hettrick of Dalmellington, he also traced the Roman Road from the Doon of Tynron, in Dumfries-shire, to the town of Ayr. In short, the information accumulated relative to the history, antiquities, manners, and customs of the ancient Gallovidians, furnished ample details for the projected work; but the moment the correspondence with Sir Walter was entered into, he not only persuaded Captain Denniston to abandon the embryo history, but from thenceforth resolved himself on giving up all idea of authorship, determined to devote his attention to the collection of whatever might be interesting or advantageous to the gifted Baronet. The greater portion of the material collected, after having been digested and extended, found its way to Abbotsford. Some of the communications, however, were sent as they were received; one, in particular, from Mr Broadfoot, teacher at the Clachan of Peningham—author of the popular song “The Hills of Galloway,” and several poems on traditional subjects—it is perhaps worth mentioning, was signed *clashbottom*, a professional appellation, derived from the use of the birch. This facetious individual, we understand, was very nearly related to the celebrated “Jedediah of Ganderclough;” and, like him, frequently tasted the mountain dew with the exciseman and the landlord, not in the Wallace Inn at Ganderclough, but at the sign of the “Shoulder of Mutton” in Newton Stewart, being the prototype of his now celebrated namesake.

Among other legendary stories transmitted, Mr Train gave an account of an astrologer who had wandered in the wilds of Galloway; and, as *Guy Mannering* did not appear for two years afterwards, it was reasonable to suppose that this brief narrative had supplied the groundwork of that inimitable novel. Sir Walter, however, explains in the introduction, that the story was originally told him by an old servant of his father; but Lockhart, in his “Life of Scott,” has given the whole of the ballad on

which the romance was founded, as recovered by Mr Train, from the recitation of an old lady in Castle-Douglas, yet alive.

As previously mentioned, Mr Train was one of a number of assistant officers despatched to Perth in 1810, for the suppression of illicit distillation, which was then carried on in that quarter to a great extent. While engaged in that service, he had been an attentive observer of the working of the excise statutes; and he conceived that the growing opposition to the law might be greatly obviated by certain salutary alterations in the system. He accordingly drew up an Essay on the subject, but it was not till 1815 that he had an opportunity of placing it before the Board; when, through the instrumentality of Sir Walter Scott, the manuscript was shown to Mr Earl, one of the Commissioners of the Customs, who highly approved of the view he had taken of the subject. Among other evils of the excise laws, the Essay pointed out the bad effects of what was called the *Highland Line*, and of not licensing stills of a less extent than 500 gallons, recommending at the same time the total drawback of the duty on malt used in legal distillation, as the most certain method of putting down the efforts of the Highland smuggler. The Essay not only met the approbation of Mr Earl, but of both the Board of Excise and Customs, accompanied by whose recommendations it was forwarded to the Lords of the Treasury; and Mr Train had the gratification of seeing his suggestions ultimately become the law of the land.

Continuing his researches throughout Galloway, our antiquary was successful in discovering a variety of curious remains. He became possessed of a Roman battle-axe, found in the Moss of Cree; and the head of a spear, picked up near to Merton Hall, in the parish of Peningham, where the military road passes from Newton Stewart to Glenluce. A razor of peculiar workmanship, found at the Boss Cairn of Dranandow—an immense accumulation of stones on the Moor of Minnigaff—with the word “Paris” on the blade, and bearing to have been manufactured in the fifteenth century, also came into his possession; and indirectly, from a descendant of Rob Roy, he procured an antique purse, which had actually belonged to that celebrated freebooter. Having been invited to Edinburgh by Sir Walter.

whom he had not as yet seen, Mr Train set out on his journey for the metropolis in May 1816, carrying with him the spleuchan of Rob Roy, as a relic in which the Baronet was likely to be interested. We shall give Mr Train's own account of his reception and entertainment :—

“ Upon my arrival in town, I was received by Sir Walter in the most friendly manner ; he seemed delighted with my gleanings. I found that he had even then begun to collect specimens of ancient armour. He pointed out to me particularly a pair of large old brass spurs, with large rowels—two Andrea Ferraras, with basket hilts—a leathern target, studded with large brass nails—and an Indian coat-of-mail, made of wire rings, which articles, I presume, formed in 1816 the greater part of that museum which has since become so extensive.

The Ettrick Shepherd was in town ; and Sir Walter, upon learning that we were not personally acquainted, for the purpose of introducing me to the Bard of Altrive, despatched a servant with a card, inviting him to dinner that day, but he could not be found ; even Blackwood did not know in what part of the town he lodged. I regretted this the more, as Sir Walter had had the kindness to invite to his table that day likewise, on my account, the fifth Bard of the Queen's Wake, who is thus described—

‘ The fifth was from a western shore,
Where rolls the dark and sullen Orr ;
Of peasant make and doubtful mien,
Affecting airs of proud disdain :—
Wide curl'd his raven locks and high,
Dark was his visage, dark his eye,
That glanced around on dames and men,
Like falcon on the cliffs of Ken ;
Some ruffian mendicant, whose wit
Presumed at much, for all unfit ;
No one could read the character,
If knave, or genius, wit was there ;
But all supposed, from mien and frame,
From Erin he an exile came.
With hollow voice and harp ill strung,
Some bungling parody he sung,
Well known to maid and matron grey
Through all the glens of Galloway ;
For often had he conn'd it there
With simpering and affected air.
Listen'd the Court, with sidelong bend,
In wonder how the strain would end ;
But long ere that it grew so plain,
They scarce from hooting could refrain ;
And each to other 'gan to say—
“ *What good can come from Galloway?*” ’

I have often thought since, what a high treat it would have been to see the Galloway Poet placed beside his satirical acquaintance from Ettrick.

The impression made on my mind by the picture of the 'bungling bard,' was really nowise relieved by his dogmatic assertions and pretensions during the evening. A pair of ptarmigans at table, which Sir Walter said he had received that day as a present from the North, was a treat to every one present except him from the 'sullen Orr,' who said those birds were as abundant as pigeons in Galloway. Sir Walter smiled, and I made no reply.

Wilkie's well-known picture of Sir Walter and his family had just been received from the hands of the artist. Lady Scott brought it in after dinner; and Captain Fergusson, Mr Pringle, then editor of Blackwood's Magazine, and another gentleman whose name I have now forgotten, praised the execution of the whole piece; but the Galloway man, with much effrontery, persisted in saying there was not one correct likeness in the group. Miss Scott, with much archness, replied, 'Ah! Mr M*****, I had quite forgotten that you were a painter. I have often heard it said that there is no friendship between persons of the same profession; but I never had the pleasure of seeing the adage so completely verified before!' Lady Scott's face reddened, and her eye glanced seemingly with indignation; but she left the room without speaking, and did not return again that evening.

During the time occupied in examining the pictures, and whilst Miss Scott played some national airs upon the harp, Sir Walter was engaged in his library with Mr Alexander Campbell, author of 'Albyn's Anthology,' 'Trying,' as he said, when he returned to the drawing-room, 'how some verses composed by him would suit a beautiful Gaelic air composed by Mr Campbell. I think the air was—*Rimhin alun' stu' mo run*', and the words by Sir Walter—*The sun upon the Wardlaw hill*.

* * * *

Having to leave town next day, Sir Walter said I might rise early and amuse myself in his library till breakfast, which I accordingly did. His library was then very extensive, but he made large additions to it afterwards. His pictures on canvass then consisted chiefly of a full-length portrait of himself, a fine view of the Island of Staffa, with an original painting of the celebrated Lord Dundee. I was examining this picture with much attention, when Sir Walter entered the room. 'Claverhouse,' said I, 'appears much more mild and gentle than one could suppose from reading the accounts of his actions, as detailed by Wodrow, Cruickshanks, or any other ecclesiastical historian who has treated of the period in which he lived.' 'No man,' replied Sir Walter, 'has been more traduced by his historians, by following out the superstitious belief that he rode a goblin Galloway, was proof against shot, and in league with the devil.' I asked Sir Walter, if he might not, in good hands, be made the hero of a national romance, as interesting as either Wallace or the Pretender. 'He might,' was the reply; 'but your western zealots would require to be faithfully portrayed to make the picture complete.' Seeing that the subject pleased Sir Walter, I added, 'and if the story was delivered as if from the mouth of Old Mortality—in a manner somewhat similar to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*—it would certainly heighten the effect of the tale.' 'Old Mortality! man! who was he?' said Sir Walter hastily, his eye brightening at the same time; and I will never forget the intense anxiety he evinced whilst I related briefly all the particulars of that singular individual I could then recollect.

I promised, immediately on my return to Galloway, to make every possible inquiry respecting him, and to forward the same either to Abbotsford or to Edinburgh, without the least delay. He said he would look most anxiously for my communication; and he spoke these words so emphatically, as to leave no doubt on my mind that the information required was for the purpose of being published.

At breakfast, again adverting to the Covenanters in the west of Scotland, Sir Walter said that great distress had been brought upon the inhabitants of Ayrshire, in the year 1678, by the rapacity of the 'Highland host,' and afterwards by the visionary folly instilled by the clergy into the minds of their simple followers. He spoke, too, of the singular charter granted by Robert II. in the year 1378, relating to the Church of St John at Ayr, which I had recently published in a periodical work. He said he had never visited the ancient town of Ayr; but should have done so ere that time, had I not sent him so much information respecting the landing of Bruce in Carrick and the leper establishment at Prestwick, afterwards called King's Case. Neither had he visited Galloway, farther than being once at Gatehouse on professional business; but he said I had raised his curiosity so much respecting these places, that, if his health permitted, he was resolved to take a journey to that quarter the following summer, but that he would apprise me beforehand, in order that I might accompany him to the most noted places: but he unfortunately came no farther than Dumfries, being obliged by private business to return to Abbotsford.

Sir Walter, Lady Scott, and the younger branches of the family, were all at table. I was the only stranger present. Miss Scott was at that time a lively, intelligent young lady, and seemingly very fond of music. She said she had been pressing her father for some time to make verses to the Gaelic air usually sung by women at the '*wauking of the cloth*' in the Highlands. Sir Walter acknowledged that it was good groundwork for a song, and said that he would at some not far distant period comply with her request; but I do not remember having since seen any lines or verses by Sir Walter on that subject.

The young heir-apparent of Abbotsford was then attending the High School, and it was his custom, when on his way thither every morning from Castle Street, to call at the shop of the family baker for a roll of bread. On the preceding day, having received his accustomed loaf, and leaving the shop with it in his hand, as he was in the act of putting it into his pocket, a young tatterdemalion snatched it from him, and ran off. Upon Charles, the younger brother, relating this story, his mother upbraided Walter in a most jocular manner, for allowing an urchin (who, he admitted, was much younger than himself) to take as it were the very bit out of his mouth, without his making any effort to recover it, or to chastise the naughty imp. 'Oh! mother, he was seemingly very poor, and perhaps hungry. I did not care for the loaf, for I fasted till I came home to dinner.' 'Your motives were perhaps good,' said his father; 'but it was childish in you, Walter, to punish yourself for the impudence perhaps of a worthless individual. However, if you profit as much by losing your loaf, as Franklin did by purchasing his whistle—*The bit was better gi'en than eaten*, as the old proverb says.'

The great Spanish wolf-dog, *Maida*, was in attendance during breakfast, and he did not lack his part. He seemed very much attached to Sir Walter, who said he got him in a present from Glengary, who had then the only specimen of that breed in Scotland. As we were thus conversing, a coach arrived to carry Sir Walter to the Court of Ses-

sion. At parting, he most kindly invited me to Abbotsford, where he said he had much more leisure than in Edinburgh.

Lady Scott afterwards showed me a gold snuff-box, presented by George IV., then Prince Regent, to Sir Walter. It is of a square form, with a short inscription on the inside of the lid. Likewise a large silver chalice, presented to him by the Prince of Wales in 1806; and a silver flagon of very exquisite workmanship, a present from the City of Edinburgh. But my attention was most attracted by the magnificent sepulchral vase of silver, which Lady Scott said cost £300, presented by Lord Byron to Sir Walter. It contained several fragments of a human skull, with the letter, which Sir Walter says was afterwards purloined. It was a wretched scrawl, not exceeding, I think, twenty words in length: but was nevertheless valuable to the legitimate possessor, but could not be so to any other person, even although the theft admitted of being concealed.*

Proud of the kind reception I had met with in Edinburgh from Sir Walter, I returned to Galloway, resolving to use every means in my power to serve him, by collecting traditionary stories of every description, but more particularly what related to the Covenanters and to Old Mortality."

Mr Train, speedily implementing his promise, transmitted an interesting account of Old Mortality, and several other matters of value to the Author of *Waverley*, in return for which Sir Walter, writing on the 16th of December 1816, after apologising for not sooner thanking him for "the very curious communications," from which he had derived both instruction and amusement, says—"You will be surprised to find Old Mortality has got into print. As a trifling return for your attention, and presuming that the tales will interest you, I send a copy for your acceptance by the Portpatrick mail. I shall be glad if they afford you some amusement."

While in London for a short time in the summer of 1815, Sir Walter became acquainted with the great antiquary, Mr Chalmers, author of *Caledonia*, then engaged in preparing the third volume of that work for the press; and as it was to comprise all the southern and western counties of Scotland, Sir Walter mentioned the probability of Mr Train being able to assist him in the ancient history of Galloway and Ayrshire, giving him at the same time an account of the "Piet's Kiln" and the "Murder Hole," which Mr Train had previously forwarded to Sir Walter. This led to a correspondence with Mr Chalmers, which continued till

* Moore's Life of Byron.

the death of that eminent individual, and was a source of much pleasure to Mr Train, who contributed to his great national work a succinct account of the Roman Post on “the Black Water of Dec,”* near New Galloway—a sketch and description of the Roman Camp at Rispain,† near Whithorn—and of the Roman Way‡ from the Doon of Tynron, in Dumfries-shire, to the town of Ayr. Mr Chalmers, unacquainted with these facts, asserted, in his Introduction, that the Romans had never penetrated into Wigtonshire; but, in the third volume, he took the opportunity of correcting the mistake, and in a letter, dated “Office for Trade, Whitehall, 20th June 1818,” compliments Mr Train in the following terms:—“You will enjoy the glory of being the first who has traced the Roman footsteps so far westward into Wigtonshire, and the Roman Road from Dumfries-shire to Ayr town. You have gone far beyond any correspondent of mine in these parts.”

Mr Train had the merit of tracing another vestige of antiquity, which, if not equal in importance to the Roman Road, involved a great deal more labour and research. This was an old wall, termed “The Deil’s Dyke,” mentioned by the minister of Kells, in the appendix to the Statistical Account of Scotland, as an old dyke of extraordinary magnitude, which ran south and north through the parish to the extent of ten miles. Dr Clapperton of Lochmaben, father of the celebrated traveller of that name, formed the design of tracing the wall; but he died before he accomplished his object, and it never was known what progress he had made in the attempt. Though the task demanded much more leisure and means than Mr Train could well command, he nevertheless resolved to undertake it; and, with an enthusiasm which none but a genuine antiquary could possibly feel, he ultimately succeeded in tracing the dyke from the side of Lochryan, in Wigtonshire, to Hightae, in the parish of Lochmaben, Dumfries-shire, a distance of nearly eighty miles. In the course of his progress, Mr Train consulted almost every charter of the lands through which the wall passed; but, as the written land-rights of Gallo-

* Caledonia, vol. iii. p. 226.

† Ibid. p. 354.

‡ Ibid. p. 447.

way are chiefly of a modern date, he obtained no additional information from these documents, and the question of its origin still remains unsettled. Mr Train had commenced his survey of the old wall prior to his becoming acquainted with Mr Chalmers, and it was nearly finished when he communicated the particulars to that gentleman, who had never heard of it before. A number of communications passed between them on the subject. In one of his letters, Mr Chalmers says—

“ All the late antiquarian discoveries in the south of Scotland sink into insignificance when compared with the ‘ Deil’s Dyke !’ But I wish you to understand, my good sir, that there are questions which rise out of your communications, which justifies the observation of Mr Hume, that there are questions in history as difficult of solution as any in the sciences, such as the *Deil’s Dyke* ! Considering all its circumstances, it is extremely difficult to assign its age, its object, or its builders. In Ireland, there is nothing like the Deil’s Dyke, the Catrael, and other works of that nature in Scotland. The inference is, that the Deil’s Dyke was not built by Irish hands ; and I am disposed to think it is several centuries older than the arrival of the Irish Cruithne or Picts in Galloway.

The history of Galloway would of itself, in your hands, supply sufficient materials for the curious pen of history, though it would be subject to the objections which may be formed to all history, that it is less captivating than poetry, and less amusing than the romance, which is so attractive in the hands of our friend Walter Scott, and for which, I am informed, you have supplied many materials.

Whitehall, 22d August 1819.”

This allusion to his correspondence with Sir Walter, Mr Train conceived to be one of the many stratagems adopted to unveil the author of the *Waverley Novels*, then only known to a very limited circle. In his reply, he of course left the concluding part of the antiquary’s letter unanswered. Though his communications to Chalmers were numerous, and some of them very lengthy, it did not interrupt his correspondence with Sir Walter. In a letter, dated January 14, 1817, we find the latter thanking Mr Train for his “ communications, past, present, and to come,” and intimating that, as a change had taken place in the Crown Council, a particular friend of his having been appointed Lord Advocate,* he had great hopes of securing his immediate promotion. The necessary information, as to length of service and other particu-

* Mr A. Maconochie, now Lord Meadowbank.

lars, was forwarded according to the request of Sir Walter; but, though no exertion was spared on his part, it was not for some time afterwards that his repeated applications were successful.

Amongst other communications to which Sir Walter refers in his letter, was the story of "Sir Ulrick Macwhirter"—a tradition relative to the estate of Blairquhan, afterwards published, as originally written by Mr Train, in "Chambers' Picture of Scotland." A copy of this tradition having been sent to Sir David Hunter Blair, the early patron of the author, to whom, as possessor of the estate, it would be no doubt interesting, Sir Walter, apprised of the circumstance, made no use of the tradition, as he said, merely that Sir David might publish it the way most agreeable to himself, who accordingly caused the story to be sent to Mr Robert Chambers.

Another interesting document forwarded to Sir Walter about this period, was an old manuscript history of the Stewart family of Invernahyle, which had been picked up by Dr Thomson of Newton Stewart, while practising as a surgeon in the district of Appin. It contained an account of "Donald Na Nord, the Hammerer," with which Sir Walter was greatly pleased. In "Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his friend in London," edited by R. Jamieson, and published in 1822, it appeared for the first time as a contribution from Sir Walter Scott; and subsequently, in the second series of "Tales of a Grandfather," the Life of Donald the Hammerer was given in a condensed form. Writing to Mr Train on the 22d February 1817, Sir Walter says—"I am much obliged by your continued and kind communications. That on the subject of the Invernahyle family, I am particularly interested in; for Alexander Stewart, with whom the pedigree concludes, was my father's intimate friend; and, as I was very fond of his society while a boy, and of listening to his old stories, I have still in my recollection no small stock of legendary lore, derived from that source, and always think of his memory with peculiar fondness. * * * * Pray, secure me as many Galloway traditions as you can, for they are most interesting. Were I as poetical as I have been, I would certainly weave the tale of *Plunton* into verse." Sir Walter afterwards founded

the melodrama of "The Doom of Devorgoil" on this story,* which was originally obtained from Captain Denniston, and forwarded in the handwriting of that gentleman. †

Another remnant of antiquity afterwards fell into the hands of Mr Train, which was greatly prized by Sir Walter Scott. This was the ancient granite weapon called a *Celt*. It was found in the Moor of Knockbrax, in the parish of Peningham, about eight feet below the surface. On acquainting the author of *Caledonia* with the particulars of the discovery, he wrote as follows in reply:—"I have seen only one *Celt* discovered in Ireland; but there have been several found in England, and even in Scotland. From this and other circumstances, I am inclined to infer that the settlement in Ireland is much later than that in Britain, whatever General Vallaney may say."

Our author's next visit to Edinburgh occurred in 1817, at which period he remained about a week, and was almost a constant guest at "Old 39" North Castle Street. On meeting, Sir Walter, not having seen him subsequently to the publication of "Old Mortality," spoke freely on the subject of that novel, and of the fate of Supervisor Kennedy, as recorded in "Guy Mannering." Amongst other guests at the table, he one day met the late Sir Alexander Boswell, who, on that occasion, presented Sir Walter with a thin 4to volume, which he said had been "written, printed, and bound by himself." The poem was entitled the "Flitting of the Sow," founded on an Ayrshire tradition.

In the spring of 1818, Mr Train sent Sir Walter the ladle of the last resident hangman in Dumfries, with an account of the manner of using it, as described in the 13th volume of the *Waverley Novels*; and shortly afterwards he furnished a sketch of "Feckless Fanny," the prototype of Madge Wildfire, gleaned from the recollection of old people in various parts of the coun-

* See Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. iv. cap. 11.

† In a letter to Torry. Sir Walter says, "the story admits of the highest degree of decoration, both by poetry, music, and scenery." The scene of the tale is laid at Linnex Plunton, the property of A. Murray, Esq. of Broughton, member of Parliament for Kirkeudbright.

try, which Sir Walter published in his notes to the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*. Having learned, from an Excise friend in Morayshire, a great many particulars regarding the superstitions and customs of the Norlings—a colony of fishermen who at an early period took up their residence at Findhorn, similar to those of Buckhaven, in Fifeshire—Mr Train drew up an account of them, which he sent to Sir Walter.

The next relic transmitted to Abbotsford by Mr Train, was a very large horn, supposed to be that of an elk, found nearly twelve feet below the surface in the bed of the Water of Cree, during the dry summer of 1819. Though specimens of Natural History were rather out of his way, the fossil was nevertheless greatly prized; and Sir Walter acknowledged the receipt of it in the following facetious terms:—

“ I had not time to put my friend the Lord Advocate *to the Horn*, he came to it himself yesterday. I do not mean, my dear sir, as you will no doubt readily perceive, a ‘horning from the Court of Session,’ but to see your fossil. I have assured him most sincerely that, upon his fulfilling his promise made in your behalf, I will feel great pleasure in presenting him with it, not to place on his brow, because I do not think he requires such an unwieldy ornament; but, when he is raised to the bench, an appointment which I understand is soon to take place, to hang it with a broad blue ribbon round his neck, as emblematic of the ‘Hornings’ so frequently used by their lordships.”

The promotion of Mr Maconochie to the bench followed soon after the date of the foregoing letter. He was succeeded by Sir William Rae, to whom Sir Walter lost no time in applying in behalf of his *protege*; and, in a letter of the 27th January 1820, joyfully intimates that the Board, at the request of the Lord Advocate, had appointed him to attend with a view to his promotion. By the next post, Mr Train received a letter from the Board, calling him to Edinburgh, but for what purpose he could never rightly understand, having been only asked a few trifling questions by Mr Parish, the Chairman of the Board, who told him to return again to his charge, and his promotion would take place in due course.

Not wishing to put off much time in Edinburgh on this occasion, he had an opportunity of seeing Sir Walter only for a few minutes before leaving town next morning. He understood from

the Secretary, with whom he afterwards became very intimate, that the delay in his promotion rested alone with Mr Parish, who had a great many private friends upon whom to bestow his favours. In the course of ten months afterwards, however, he had the pleasure of receiving a letter from Sir Walter, announcing his appointment as Supervisor, which was speedily confirmed by an official intimation on the subject.

Mr Train was now removed to Cupar-Fife, where he had a wide district under his charge. Carrying the spirit of antiquarian inquiry into this new county, he speedily had all the Excise officers within his bounds impressed with similar curiosity, eager to search out old relics and pick up traditionary stories. In his zeal, one of them, then stationed at Auchtermuchty, not only stripped the state chair of James IV., in the Palace of Falkland, of nearly all the cloth that covered it, but broke down the greater part of the carving, which he forwarded to Mr Train at Cupar! This gave our antiquary much uneasiness; for, however greatly he valued such "fragments of time gone by," he never coveted any thing that could not be procured in an honourable way. He was successful in collecting some curious traditions respecting the famous crosses of M'Duff and Mugdrum, which so interested Sir Walter that he visited the place in the course of the following summer, and shortly afterwards published the drama of "M'Duff's Cross."

Mr Train was soon removed to Kirkintilloch, to officiate in the room of the supervisor of that district, who was indisposed. Here he resumed his antiquarian pursuits with unabated zeal. Among the first fruits of his labour were several valuable Roman relics—a sword, a tripod, and a brass-plate, the latter found in the ruins of Castle Carey about 1775. He also transmitted to Sir Walter a very interesting account of the image of St Flanning, which, prior to the Reformation, had adorned a chapel bearing the name of the Saint, the ruins of which still stand, a few miles distant, from Kirkintilloch. The peculiar virtues of St Flanning adhered to him long after the reverse of his fortunes:—

"When the image," says Mr Train, "disappeared from the public eye at the Reformation, it was taken secretly into the possession of a poor family in the neighbourhood, who in a short time, by frugal industry, became more wealthy than any of their

neighbours; but it being at last discovered that they were in possession of the image of the Irish Saint, the improvement in their circumstances was wholly ascribed to the tutelary protection of St Flanning.

The desire of wealth soon gained so great an ascendancy over religious tenets, that the most stern Reformers in the Barony claimed as their right to take the image of the Saint at certain periods, or on particular occasions, into their possession; till at length the idol became the joint property of all the people of the community; but out of the bounds of the Barony nothing could tempt them to allow it to be taken even a single step.

The peasants of the surrounding country imagined that the people of Saint Flanning were the happiest individuals in the universe. They thought they saw their sheep fatter than those of any other district; their women and children more healthy; and their property increase more rapidly—all which was ascribed to the particular care the Saint had taken of them for preserving his image after almost every other of a similar description in the country had been destroyed.

These envious neighbours had often attempted to steal away the image, but without success, till about a year ago* they hired two ruffians, who were little known in that part of the country, to take it out of the house of an old woman who had it carefully wrapt up in her intended winding-sheet; after which they spread a rumour that these fellows, being smugglers, had buried the Saint under a whisky-still in Fannyside Moor, but the people of Saint Flanning firmly believe that the image is still in their neighbourhood, and are strengthened in their opinion, as they say, by the thriving appearance of the supposed possessors of the venerable relic."

From Kirkintilloch, Mr Train was removed to Queensferry in June 1822. Here he was equally alert in the service of Sir Walter, having, besides several remains of antiquity, transmitted him a very amusing account of the annual "riding of the marches" by the freemen of Linlithgow. While in this district, he became possessed of a curious object of natural history. Mr Struthers, proprietor of a brick manufactory at Blackness, but who lived at Linlithgow, happening to be astir one summer morning pretty early, met a drum-boy proceeding from the Palace towards the guard-house, with what appeared to him to be a bird's nest in his hand. Stepping up to see what it contained, he found six eggs in it, one of which was broken. To his surprise, the nest and eggs appeared to be all of marble, but retaining their original shape and colour. The drummer said, that being on guard, and feeling himself drowsy at daybreak, he went to the Palace to amuse himself; and, finding his way in, he discovered the nest in one of the recesses of the wall, in that part of the Palace

* Written in 1822.

called Queen Mary's Chambers. Mr Struthers made a purchase of the curiosity for a trifle, and the "Palace nest," as it was afterwards termed, soon became an object of much investigation. It was not, as at first supposed, a petrification, but an encrustment of calcareous earth and sand, and deemed most likely to have been brought to the Palace as a curiosity, where it had evidently escaped the conflagration of the building by the soldiers of Oliver Cromwell. This conjecture was strengthened by the circumstance of the one side of it being blackened apparently by smoke.

As the district of South Queensferry extended to within three miles of Edinburgh, Mr Train had frequent opportunities of calling on Sir Walter. At his request, he set about collecting information respecting the manners, customs, traditions, and superstitions of the fishermen of Buckhaven, and, in doing so, first gave Sir Walter a description of the *Hailly Hoo*, a superstition alluded to in *Quentin Durward*.

In consequence of the cessation of the duty on salt, Mr Train was removed, in January 1823, to Falkirk. Here he became acquainted with Joseph Stainton, Esq., one of the proprietors and sole conductor of the work at Carron, from whom, before his death, he obtained the stock-bow of Sir John the Graeme, who fell at the battle of Falkirk in 1298. From Mr Stainton he received various other interesting relics. These, together with two drinking *quaihs*—the one made of a portion of Wallace's Tree in the Torwood; the other, of the yew planted above the grave of the gallant Graeme—he presented to Sir Walter, who seemed highly gratified with this renewed instance of the Supervisor's zeal.

Well aware that the business of a supervisor is one of almost unremitting drudgery, Sir Walter endeavoured to procure the advance of Mr Train to the rank of General Surveyor or Collector. With this view he applied to the Prime Minister of the day, and communicated the result in the following letter:—

“ TO MR JOSEPH TRAIN.

DEAR MR TRAIN,

I have received two very kind letters from Lord Liverpool and Mr Peel, on the subject of your promotion. It seems the appointment lies with the Board of

Excise, not with the Treasury ; but they have recommended you to Mr Lushington, which one would think would be sufficient from their natural high influence.

I remain,

Dear Mr Train,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) WALTER SCOTT.

Edinburgh, 23d June 1824."

Unfortunately for Mr Train, the Excise in Scotland had been placed under the control of the London Commissioners in the beginning of 1824, at which period Englishmen exclusively were appointed to the higher stations, and a system of unprincipled persecution ensued, which left few of the former superior officers on the list. Mr Train did not altogether escape the danger of being swept away by the inundation of expectants from the southern side of the border, who went about every where endeavouring to fix charges of misconduct on the officers. One of these individuals, with the help of a crowbar, succeeded in wresting off the fastening of a distillery utensil in Mr Train's district ; and though the latter proved, to the satisfaction of the Board, that it was not defective, he was nevertheless removed to the Wigton district, "not," as his friend Commissioner Cornwall informed him, "for any neglect on his part, but for being so plain in his defence, which *courtesy to the strangers* required to be marked by the displeasure of the Board !" Such was the degraded state to which the change of 1824 reduced the officials of the Scottish Excise. Soon after this, on a vacancy occurring in the Dumfries station, Mr Train was transferred to that district on his own application.

In 1825, a paragraph having appeared in the "Paisley Advertiser," containing some facts relative to the correspondence between Sir Walter and Mr Train, the object of which was to fix the authorship of the Waverley Novels on Sir Walter, Mr Train felt it necessary to undertake a journey to Abbotsford, in order to justify himself from all suspicion of a breach of confidence. He found Sir Walter exceedingly indifferent on the subject. The Baronet was in Dublin when he first observed the article alluded to in a Paris newspaper, and his only surprise was, how it had found its way there before he had seen it in the English journals. On

this occasion he presented Sir Walter with the head of an Uris, an Andrea Ferrara said to have belonged to the famous Laird of Lagg, and several other antiquities. On the way to Abbotsford, by Mount Benger, Mr Train first became personally acquainted with the Ettrick Shepherd, with whom, on his return, he again met at Lamington fair, where a party of strolling players were to enact the Brownie of Bodsbeck in a barn, at which the Shepherd seemed much pleased.

Mr Train again visited Sir Walter at Edinburgh in the spring of the following year, when he related to him at table the story of a Fifeshire Surgeon's Daughter, with which his host was greatly pleased. This formed the nucleus of the much-admired tale bearing that name in the "Chronicles of the Canongate;" and Mr Train was no doubt gratified to observe the honourable mention made of his name in the introduction to that work.

It was natural, perhaps, to suppose that a person of literary habits like Mr Train, might not be so zealous in the discharge of his excise duties as others who had no such taste to abstract their attention. An idea of this kind seems to have influenced the Secretary to the Board—a petty tyrant of the name of Pape, who held the situation for about seven years. A person in the coast guard, who went disguised for the purpose, having discovered that the toll-keeper of Sark Bridge toll-bar, about twenty-six miles from Dumfries, sold whisky privately without a license, Mr Train was reduced for a time from the rank of Supervisor; his crime being that of allowing a person of a different establishment to come into his district, and detect what should have been discovered by himself or some of his officers. Considering the nature of the offence—the distance of the toll-bar from his residence—and the previous service of Mr Train—the suspension must be considered as unjustifiably severe. At the end of six months, however, he was restored to his former rank, and appointed to Castle-Douglas district, in the room of Mr Robert Porteous, one of the most efficient supervisors in the service of the Excise, who also became a victim of the notorious Pape.

Here Mr Train has since resided, and for nine years performed the laborious duties of his avocation, without the slightest cen-

sure from the Board. Notwithstanding the fatiguing nature of his business, Mr Train contrived to devote considerable attention to his favourite researches, and to continue his correspondence with Sir Walter. The first of his letters from this district is dated November 1827:—

“ SIR,

I have learned that there is in the possession of the Glover Incorporation of Perth a peculiarly fantastic garb, that was formerly worn by one of the Morrice-Dancers in all their public processions. The first public exhibition of it was made before one of our kings on a platform erected on the Tay, near Perth, when the river was frozen over, on which occasion his majesty was so much pleased that he conferred particular marks of favour on the Corporation, which they enjoy to this day.

This antique consists of stout fawn-coloured silk cloth, with trappings of red and green satin, richly flowered, and is so fashioned as to cover the legs and arms of the wearer, over which parts of the body are buckled buff or chamois leather strops, with twenty-one small bells affixed to each. My informant thinks the bells amount to at least 250, each having a different tone.

There is likewise a cap made of the same materials, in the form of a cone, covered with a kind of network of leather thongs, the ends of which hang around the wearer's neck and shoulder; and on the end of the thong is fixed a large nutshell, intended to rattle as the person walks or moves his head.

The last wearer of this fantastic habiliment was the present Lord Lynedoch, who frequently paraded the streets of Perth in it, as a recruiting officer, about the commencement of the last war, when raising the 90th regiment of foot.”

On the hint thus furnished regarding the old Morrice-Dancers, Sir Walter improved with his usual ability in the “Fair Maid of Perth,” where the peculiarities of that class of mountebanks are graphically portrayed. The “Wild Man of Dinwiddie Green,” the “Fire Raid,” and “Kimstrie's Willie,” were among the traditions forwarded by Mr Train during his stay at Dumfries.

Sir Walter having intimated his intention of publishing a new edition of his Novels and Romances, from *Waverley* to *Woodstock*, with an introduction and notes, Mr Train eagerly set about collecting the desired information; and, in the course of a few weeks, forwarded to Abbotsford an account of Skipper Hawkins, the prototype of Dirk Hetterick, and Flora Marshall, the supposed original of Meg Merrilees; also an anecdote of Willie Marshall, King of the western gypsies—all of which were inserted in the fourth volume of the series. The additional account

of Old Mortality, and the sketch of Cooper Clyment, in volume ix. pp. 227, 228, were also sent about the same time. In acknowledgment of these favours, Sir Walter, on the 17th April 1829, wrote as follows :—

“ MY DEAR TRAIN,

Your valuable communication arrived in clipping-time, and adds highly to the obligations which your kindness has so often conferred on me. I shall hardly venture to mention the extraordinary *connexion between the Bonaparte family and that of Old Mortality*, till I learn from you how it is made out; whether by continued acknowledgment and correspondence between the families of the two brothers, or otherwise. A strain of genius (too highly toned in the old patriarch) seems to have run through the whole family. The minister of Galashiels is a clever man, and so is his brother. What a pity Old Mortality's grave cannot be discovered! I would certainly erect a monument to his memory at my own expense.”

The greater portion of Sir Walter's letter is devoted to the subject of Mr Train's promotion, which he seems never to have lost sight of, though, as we have seen, his exertions were not always crowned with success. In reply, Mr Train stated that he had been prevented from answering his kind letter sooner, Mr Paterson not having drawn up the account of his family so early as promised. “ I thought it would be more satisfactory to you,” adds Mr Train, “ to have an account of his relations in America, written by himself, than any thing I could say on the subject. Although you will see that what is stated in the inclosed communication does not amount to positive proof of the *Queen of Westphalia's father being the son of Old Mortality*, I for my own part have no doubt that he was.” The document here referred to, furnished by Robert Paterson, Dalry, Kirkeudbrightshire, son of Old Mortality, then in his seventy-fifth year, and who is yet alive, gives a distinct account of his brother, John, sailing in a vessel called “ The Golden Rule of Whitehaven,” from the Water of Cree, in Galloway, for America in the year 1774—of his making a considerable fortune during the American War—and of his afterwards settling at Baltimore, where he improved his fortune, married, and became highly respectable. He had a son named Robert, after Old Mortality, his father, and a daughter named Elizabeth, after his mother, whose maiden name was Grey. Robert married an American lady, who, outliving

him, has become Marchioness of Wellesley. Elizabeth was married to Jerome Bonaparte, and after her separation from him wedded Monsieur Serrurier, the French consul at Baltimore. Extraordinary as these circumstances may appear, Sir Walter was convinced of the truth of the statement, and declined publishing it solely in deference to the Duke of Wellington.

The next communication from Sir Walter was a letter of introduction, brought by Mr Skene of Rubislaw, on a visit to the Galloway coast for the purpose of taking a few sketches of local scenery. On his return to Edinburgh, Mr Skene recommended Mr Train to the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, by whom he was admitted an honorary member at their meeting in November 1829.

Having obtained from Sir Walter a copy of Waldron's History of the Isle of Man, a very scarce and curious work, Mr Train, many years ago, conceived the idea of writing a history of that Island. In the course of his researches for material, a manuscript volume fell accidentally into his hands, containing 108 Acts of the Manx Legislature prior to the accession of the Athole family to the kingdom, and which he had reason to suppose had been kept in Castle Rushen from 1422 to 1703. As this volume contained much curious information, Mr Train forwarded a transcript of it to Abbotsford, together with several Manx traditions, and extracts from various records kept of the trial and death of Christian. From a metrical history of the Isle of Man, written in the Manx language about the commencement of the sixteenth century, and which Mr Train got translated for the first time in 1828, he extracted an account of the furious inroad made into the stewardry of Kirkcubright, as described in *Peveril of the Peak*, by Earl Derby, of the Golden Crupper—a circumstance overlooked by all our historians—which was also transmitted to Sir Walter. About the same period, he forwarded a curious brass visor, found in a morass at Torrs, in the parish of Kelton. From the odd form of this antique, having horns projecting from the place where the eyeholes should have been, and which turned back like those of a goat, it was supposed to be the head-mask of a mummer, probably belonging to the neighbouring Castle of Threave.

In reply to various traditionary gleanings communicated about

the same period, Sir Walter writes—"Your account of the three Great Punch Bowls is very entertaining,* and your historical sketch of the *Siller Guns* kept at Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, as illustrative of the ancient custom of weapon-shawing, shows more research, and is more interesting, than Mayne's poem on the one kept at Dumfries; but I cannot see a peg to hang that communication on, and am sorry I cannot now find a corner for your ancient *protege*, *Mons Meg*, of loud reputation. You know I have already spoken of her pedigree; but fortunately I have not done so in a positive manner, as you have traced her propinquity so clearly, as henceforth to set all conjecture aside."

The very interesting account of this celebrated piece of ordnance, now an object of much curiosity to all who visit the Castle of Edinburgh, is as follows:—

"It is well known that every chieftain from the Clyde to the Nith was held in the most grievous subjection by the powerful family of Douglas, while Lord of Galloway. On an islet of the Dee, of twenty statute acres, stand the ruins of the Castle of Threave, which they held as the place of their pride, and used as the engine of their tyranny. Projecting from the front wall, immediately over the main gateway, is a granite block, still called the 'Gallows Knob' or 'Hanging Stane.' A vassal suspended by the neck from the stone, of which many tales of terror are still related, was considered such an evidence of power, that William Earl of Douglas, in asserting his superiority over all the other nobles of the district, boasted haughtily to the Baron of Terregles, at the commencement of their well-known feud in 1452, that the Gallows Knob of Threave had not been without a tassel for the last fifty years, whereas the little fortlet of Herries, in common with the dwelling-places of all the other petty chieftains of Galloway, was but *occasionally* decked with a dangling villain.

Sir Patrick M'Lellan, Tutor of Bomby, the chief of a powerful clan which then possessed the peninsula bounded by the Solway and the Dee, taking part with his kinsman Herries, Baron of Terregles, against Douglas, so excited the indignation of their oppressor, that he, thirsting for revenge, commenced open hostility, took the Castle of Raeberry, seized M'Lellan, and carried him prisoner to Threave, where he caused him to be hanged on the Gallows Knob, although he was Sheriff of Galloway.†

* Formerly every burgh of Scotland had a Wassail Bowl, generally of very capacious dimensions, presented by the various Commissioners of Parliament. That of Kirkcudbright was given to the incorporated trades by M'Lellan of Bomby; and, according to tradition, was first filled in public at the entertainment given to King James V. by the inhabitants of Kirkcudbright in March 1508. It is built like a tub, with wooden staves, about thirty in number, with hoops and a rim of brass, and was made to hold one anker, which is equal to nine imperial gallons.

† See Caledonia, vol. iii. p. 269.

Goaded almost to madness by this cruel outrage against the king, the law, and their clan, the M'Lellans strove by every means in their power to revenge the death of their chief; and the act of forfeiture passed by Parliament in 1455, gave them an opportunity, under the protection of Government, of throwing off that iron yoke of the Douglasses under which Galloway had groaned upwards of eighty years. When James II. arrived with an army at Carlingwark to besiege the Castle of Threave, the M'Lellans presented his Majesty with the piece of ordnance now called *Mons Meg*, to batter down the fortlet of the rebellious chieftain. The first discharge of this great gun is said to have consisted of a peck of powder and a granite ball, nearly as heavy as a Galloway cow. This ball is said, in its course through the Castle of Threave, to have carried away the hand of Margaret de Douglas, commonly called the Fair Maid of Galloway, as she sat at table with her lord, and was in the act of raising the wine-cup to her lips. Old people still maintain that the vengeance of God was thereby evidently manifested in destroying the hand which had been given in wedlock to two brothers, and that even while the lawful spouse of the first was alive.

This circumstance, I think, has tended to the preservation of the whole tradition of which it is a part. For, notwithstanding the distance of time, the whole story is told with more precision, and is more generally known in this quarter, than any other of so old a date with which I am acquainted.

The cannon is said to have been made of twenty-five bars of iron, bound together with an equal number of hoops, to represent the exact number of persons who contributed to defray the expense of making the piece.* As a recompense for the present of this extraordinary engine of war, and for the loyalty of the M'Lellans, the King, before leaving Galloway, erected the town of Kirkcudbright into a Royal Burgh, and granted to *Brawny Kim*, the smith, the lands of Mollance, in the neighbourhood of Threave Castle.

It is still customary in Galloway to call people by the name of the land they possess. Hence the smith was called Mollance. But his wife's name being Meg, and she being possessed of a stentorian voice, the cannon, in honour of her, received the appellative of 'Mollance Meg.' Nor is it singular that, in so long a course of time, the name should have been gradually corrupted into that which it is at present.

There is no smithy now at the 'Three Thorns of Carlingwark;' but a few years ago, when making the great military road to Portpatrick, which passes that way, the workmen had to cut through a deep bed of cinders and ashes, which plainly showed that there had been an extensive forge on that spot at some former period.

Although the lands of Mollance have now passed into other hands, there are several persons of the name of Kim, blacksmiths, in this quarter, who are said to be descendants of the brawny makers of Mollance Meg.

Each of the sons is said to have made three bars and three hoops, and the father to

* The first iron guns made in England were used at the siege of Berwick in 1405. In the reign of James IV., cannon were first made in Scotland of cast-metal, by Robert Borthwick, who was liberally rewarded by that Prince. Arnot's *History of Edinburgh*, p. 67, 2d edit. Edin. 1788.—See also Hollinshed's *Chronicles of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 131.—James IV. took to Flodden Field seven great cannones out of the Castel of Edinburgh, quhilk ware callit "the sewin sisters," castin by Robert Borthwick. Lindsay of Pitscottie's *Chron. of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 266, Edin. edit. 1814.

have made the remaining four. This is rather too particular for so old a story, but I give the tradition as it is related.

The Hill of Knock-Cannon, in the farm of Camp Douglas, is said to have derived its name from the circumstance of Kim's cannon having been first fired from that eminence. A more commanding position could not have been taken to batter down Threave Castle. In the end of the great hall in the Castle, directly facing Knock-Cannon, there is an aperture called the 'Cannon Hole' to this day. Here is said to have entered that ball which in its course carried away the hand of the Fair Maid of Galloway. It is generally allowed, by experienced engineers of modern times, that a better aim could not have been taken for raking the very centre of the building.

It is likewise related that while Brawny Kim and his seven sons were constructing the cannon at the 'Three Thorns of the Carlingwark,' another party was busily employed in making balls of granite on the top of Bennan Hill, and that, as each ball was finished, they rolled it down the rocky declivity, facing Threave Castle. One of these balls, said to be that which carried away the lady's hand, is still shown at Balmaghie House, the residence of Captain Gordon, in this neighbourhood. I am informed it agrees exactly in size and quality with those carried with the cannon to Edinburgh. As the balls in the Castle are evidently of Galloway granite, a strong presumptive proof is afforded that Mons Meg was of Galloway origin. The granite of Galloway is easily known, being composed of black particles of a larger size than enter into the composition of granite elsewhere.

Some years ago, Threave Castle was partially repaired under the superintendance of Sir Alexander Gordon of Culvennan, Sheriff-Depute of the Stewartry; and one of the workmen, when digging up some rubbish within the walls, found a massive gold ring, with an inscription on it, purporting that the ring had belonged to Margaret de Douglas. This curious relic was purchased from the person who found it, by Sir Alexander Gordon, who, I believe, has it in his possession.

Although history is silent as to the Fair Maid of Galloway having lost her hand at the storming of the Castle by James II., the circumstance of the gold ring, with her name on it, having been found there, seems to strengthen the probability of that having actually taken place."

The correspondence which had been so long carried on between Sir Walter Scott and Mr Train was now drawing to a close; but at no period had it been more interesting or voluminous than within the last two or three years of the Baronet's death. The edition of the novels with notes, already alluded to, was undertaken in 1829; and from that period, until its completion, Mr Train was zealous in his service. His professional duties, however, stood greatly in the way, and some of his contributions did not reach Abbotsford in time for the press. Among these was

* For a more detailed account of Mons Meg by Mr Train, see the History of Galloway at present (December 1839) in the press, which work, we have reason to know, will contain much curious and interesting matter.

an interesting sketch of Andrew Gemmell, alias Edie Ochiltree, and another of Marshall, King of the Randies. Both of these characters were well known in Galloway. Gemmell was twenty years a soldier, twenty a garrison *foggie*, and twenty a wandering mendicant. He was a native of Old Cumnock, in Ayrshire, where many of his descendants yet reside. Mr Train gives the following history of one of them :—

“ One of the most intimate friends of my early days was Andrew Gemmell, a grandson of Andrew the soldier. The grandson, my friend, was a farm-servant till the year 1799, when he was balloted to serve in the Ayrshire Militia, in which corps he acted as servant to Dr Colquhoun till 1802, when the regiment was disembodied. The Doctor then took him to pound drugs in his father’s shop in Greenock, where, having to examine the sailors enlisted into the navy, he became acquainted with Captain Tattam, who then commanded the press-ship stationed in the Clyde. The *Swinger* gun-brig being ordered to the West India station, and not having a surgeon’s mate, Captain Tattam got Gemmell appointed to that situation. On the death of the surgeon, which happened a few weeks after sailing, his mate succeeded him.* In this situation he became such a favourite with Sir Edward Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth, who then commanded the fleet on that station, that when Sir Edward received the command of the Texel Fleet, he took Gemmell with him to the Mediterranean as chief surgeon of the fleet. I have a letter before me, dated on board his Majesty’s ship *Caledonia*, off Minorca, 18th December 1812, in which he says, ‘ upwards of twenty noblemen, or noblemen’s sons, sit at the Admiral’s table, whenever the weather will permit them to come from the various ships of the fleet. In almost every dispute that arises amongst them, I am referred to, and my decision generally gives satisfaction.’ Thus, without any regular education, rose the grandson of Andrew Gemmell to the head of the medical department, and to be the intimate friend of Lord Exmouth for nearly fifteen years. I kept up a regular correspondence with him till he went to the coast of America in 1825. He died in London in 1829.”

The last of Mr Train’s communications to Abbotsford was carried by his eldest son, William, then a stripling in his sixteenth year, when on a visit to a friend in Kelso. He was received by the gifted Baronet with characteristic condescension and kindness. After many preliminary questions, he asked him what profession he wished to follow ; and, upon being answered that he was quite uncertain, Sir Walter desired to see his father at Abbotsford, “ when,” said he, “ that point may be settled between your father

* When only a short time there he got leave to return to Britain, being in bad health ; but he attended the College in London, and got out his degree as M.D., and returned to his station.

and me to your satisfaction." It was not, however, Mr Train's fortune to see Sir Walter, who, with an overwrought and broken constitution, left for the Continent on his memorable tour of health, sooner than was expected; and he had not an opportunity of paying that last tribute of respect to his distinguished friend, which admiration for his genius, and gratitude for his kindness, alike prompted him to offer.

Sanguine hopes were entertained that a more congenial clime would restore the shattered health of the illustrious invalid; and the accounts given from time to time, in the newspapers, during his residence at Naples, strengthened considerably that expectation. To hail his return to the banks of the Tweed, Mr Train wrote the following lines, which appeared in the *Dumfries Courier* :—

“ Raise, Scotia, raise with loud acclaim,
 On hill and tower the festive flame,
 Till, mirror'd in the evening sky,
 A thousand joy-lights meet the eye ;
 And let thy sons with festive glee,
 In castle, cot, and hostelry,
 The brimming *quaich* and *tawsy* drain,
 In hailing to his home again,
 The Great Magician of our land,
 Who, by a virtue of his wand,
 Has upraised lords and ladies gay,
 With belted knights in battle fray,
 Blending in his immortal page
 The feats of many a former age ;
 Nor, Scotia, have thy mountains been
 More grandly tow'ring ever seen,
 Thy sons more brave, thy maids more fair,
 Than by thy mighty Scott they are
 Described, and yet all seem so bland
 As to outrival Fairyland.

Since—well-away !—he left his home
 To search for health afar to roam,
 There could not for his weal a pray'r,
 Than mine, be offer'd more sincere ;
 Alas ! that yet the nation's pride,
 Is health, Heav'n's greatest boon, denied ;
 But soon, we hope, he'll stout and hale
 Re-charm the world with matchless tale.

Sombrous at Abbotsford the scene
 Has since the Knight's departure been ;
 But there each heart will heave with joy—
 Gladness will beam in every eye—
 The Baron's flag again to see
 Unfurl'd, as erst, it wont to be
 Over the castellated pile—
 Where the renowned host the while
 Made guest or gillic, in his hall,
 By his demcanour, happy all.

O ! meed to matchless genius due,
 To give Sir Walter, well I trew
 It boots old Scotia's sons, for on
 Ages may roll before the sun
 Shine on his like, or time can see
 One gifted so pre-eminently."

The death of Sir Walter Scott, as may well be imagined, was an event regretted by no one more deeply than Mr Train. With the Author of *Waverley* was removed the great stimulus which had urged him on in his antiquarian and traditional researches. True, he felt a pleasure in such labours on their own account ; and he has since continued to prosecute them, though not with the same relish as he experienced in contributing to the storehouse of antiquities at Abbotsford. He had then the double pleasure of acquiring, and of bestowing, what he knew would give delight to the master mind of the Great Magician. One of the most remarkable relics which has lately fallen into the hands of Mr Train, is a portion of a massy oaken bedstead, once the principal one in the Castle of Threave, and said to have been that of the Black Douglas himself. In 1453, when this fortlet submitted to the arms of James II., who commanded the siege in person, part of the furniture, among which was the bed of Douglas, who was assassinated by the King at Stirling, became the property of William de Gordon of Lochinvar. This curious piece of furniture afterwards found its way into Kenmure Castle, and from thence to Greenlaw, the seat of a collateral branch of that family. In the course of last century it became the property of a minister of the parish of Kelton, afterwards of a blacksmith at Kelton Mill, from whose daughter it was pur-

chased by Mr William Johnstone, Kirkcudbright; and by this gentleman presented to our author. The parts that remain of this very interesting relic are entirely covered with carved figures of armed men, strictly in accordance with the military statutes of the period, and apparently designed to represent every class among the retainers of the feudal chief.

Finding the duty of his district becoming oppressive, Mr Train, having then completed his twenty-eighth year in the service, applied to be placed on the retired list. His request was granted; and, since that period, he has resided in the neighbourhood of Castle-Douglas, in a cottage pleasantly situated on the banks of the Carlingwark lake.

With more leisure to pursue his favourite studies, Mr Train has lost none of his relish for literature, and even yet is buoyant enough to pay occasional court to the Muse. From his lighter and more recent pieces, we select the following song:—

“ THE BONNIE BAWBEE.

Suggested by seeing a Nobleman reject the supplication of a poor Mendicant.

What a wonderful thing
Is the face of a King
Even on copper to see;
It pleases the child
And age is beguiled
By aid of the bonnie bawbee!

Chorus.

Then, oh! how I love the bawbee,
No name is so charming to me;
The mint or the reign I mind not a grain
In pouching the bonnie bawbee!
Bawbee, in pouching the bonnie bawbee!

The love-stricken swain
May fortune disdain,
But ah! what a ninny is he?
'Tis easy to prove
The most lasting love
Is love for the bonnie bawbee!

The most worthless hash
With plenty of cash
His neighbours may find frank and free,

But from him soon they
Will all wheel away
On lack of the bonnie bawbee !

The soldier for pay
Fights oft by the day,
The lawyer fights hard for his fee ;
The bustle and strife,
Or battle of life,
Is all for the bonnie bawbee !

The preacher loves well
His hearers to tell
How they should bestow charity ;
Yet no man I wist
Can keep in his fist
Such a grip of the bonnie bawbee !

That ' friendship in need
Is friendship indeed,'
All mankind will ever agree ;
But sages contend
The most worthy friend
Is found in the bonnie bawbee !

But let not this lay
Lead any astray,
Of high or of humble degree,
His rank to forego,
By stooping too low,
To pick up a passing bawbee !

Chorus.

Yet hail to the bonnie bawbee !
Best emblem of true liberty ;
We cannot our ain
Independence maintain
Without aid of the bonnie bawbee."

Several of Mr Train's poetical effusions have appeared from time to time in the journals and magazines of the West. The following song, entitled " Garryhorn,"* appeared originally in

* Garryhorn is in Ayrshire, far up the county, and nearly on the confines of Gallo-way. The name is derived from the Gaelic, *Garbh Chuirn*, pronounced " Garryhorn," and implies, what it really is, an accumulation of " rough heights." It is a most romantic scene.

the *Dumfries Courier*, a weekly newspaper, ably conducted by his highly gifted and much valued friend Mr John M'Diarmid, author of "Sketches from Nature," and several other popular works :—

" Gin ye wad gang, lassie, to Garryhorn,
Ye might be happy I ween ;
Albeit the cuckoo was never heard there,
And a swallow there never was seen.

While cushets coo round the Mill of Glenlee,
And little birds sing on the thorn ;
Ye might hear the bonnie heather-bleat croak
In the wilds of Garryhorn.

'Tis bonnie to see at the Garryhorn
Kids skipping the highest rock,
And wrapt in his plaid on midsummer day,
The moorman tending his flock.

The reaper seldom his sickle whets there
To gather in standing corn ;
But many a sheep is to shear and smear
In the bughts of Garryhorn.

There are hams on the bauks at Garryhorn
Of braxy, and eke a store
Of cakes in the kist, and peats in the neuk,
To put aye the winter o'er.

There is aye a clog for the fire at Yule,
With a browst for New-year's morn ;
And gin ye gang up ye may sit like a queen
In the chamber at Garryhorn.

And when ye are lady of Garryhorn
Ye shall ride to the kirk with me ;
Although my mother should skelp thro' the mire
With her coats kilted up to the knee.

I woo not for siller, my bonnie May,
Sae dinna my offer scorn ;
' No ! but ye maun speer at my minny,' quo' she,
Ere I gang to Garryhorn."

We must conclude our poetical extracts with the following antiquarian song :—

" OLD SCOTIA.

I've loved thee, old Scotia, and love thee I will,
 Till the heart that now beats in my bosom is still.
 My forefathers loved thee, for often they drew
 Their dirks in defence of thy banners of blue ;
 Though murky thy glens where the wolf prowld of yore,
 And craggy thy mountains where cataracts roar,
 The race of old Albyn, when danger was nigh,
 For thee stood resolved still to conquer or die.

I love yet to roam where the beacon light rose,
 Where echo'd thy slogan or gather'd thy focs,
 Whilst forth rush'd thy heroic sons to the fight,
 Opposing the stranger who came in his might.
 I love through thy time-fretted castles to stray ;
 The mould'ring halls of thy chiefs to survey ;
 To grope through the *keep*, and the turret explore,
 Where waved the blue flag when the battle was o'er.

I love yet to roam o'er each field of thy fame,
 Where valour has gain'd thee a glorious name ;
 I love where the cairn or the cromlach is made
 To ponder, for low there the mighty are laid.
 Were these fallen heroes to rise from their graves,
 They might deem us dastards, they might deem us slaves ;
 But let a foe face thee, raise fire on each hill,
 Thy sons, my dear Scotia, will fight for thee still !"

To the *Dumfries Magazine*, in the pages of which a good many of his pieces appeared, Mr Train contributed the following lively conceit :—

" THE MAN OF STRAW.

CHAPTER FIRST.

VERSE FIRST.

When I was a farmer's boy, with a few rags and a little fodder I could make a thing resembling the human form, at any age, or in any situation of life, so minutely, that in my earliest productions, the effigy of many a living Scarecrow was so easily descried, that some persons concluded, perhaps not very injudiciously, that mankind, like the little feathered freebooters of the air, had in every age been gulled, and that too oft forsooth, by mere symbolical MEN OF STRAW.

VERSE SECOND.

My days of childhood were days of pleasure. As I decked my tawdry protectors of the waving grain with a Garter of Waterflags, a Star of Buttercups, or a Coronet of

Rushes, even Majesty itself, when decorating a favourite with similar trappings of state, could not feel more real enjoyment, or think himself greater than I. But I have heard a wise man say that there is many a Noble of the Realm, who, had his inheritance been as small as mine, would never have obtained a more gaudy Coronet—a more distinguishing Star—or a more honourable Garter, than that worn by his ennobled brother, the *highly elevated* MAN OF STRAW.

VERSE THIRD.

As I passed through the fields in the morning, to set my Scarescrows aright for the day, I frequently found many that, in the blast of night, had veered from where I had last seen them basking in the rays of the departing orb of day, to bow obsequiously before the rising sun. In journeying through life, fortunate is he who has not found a false friend or ungrateful *protege*, for many a descendant of Iscariot is lurking in the land, who, in the evening of life, would for selfish motives desert his friend or betray his master; but ere the end of my twentieth chapter, I will draw from his covert many a prototype of my unstable, but far more harmless, MAN OF STRAW.

VERSE FOURTH.

Accustomed thus to moralize, I have perhaps too great a propensity to measure the actions of all by my favourite standard of rags and fodder; but wearing, as I do, "my girdle my ain gait," when, under a scholastic vesture, I see, for the sake of lucre, the noblest faculties of the human mind perverted in striving to set vice above virtue, and to cover guilt with the white robe of innocence—then do I say to myself, the world owes less to such reptiles, than to the saving of a single barley-corn by the fluttering duds and loud-sounding rattle of a MAN OF STRAW.

VERSE FIFTH.

The people of the present generation think themselves wiser than all who have preceded them, although it cannot be denied that the poorest matron, in the darkest age of the world, knew more of the medical properties of the native plants of our mountains and valleys, than all the physicians of the present day; and yet we wisecracks of the nineteenth century, swallow every quack bolus that can be invented by Mountebanks, whose pharmaceutical faculties in the days of Esculapius, three thousand years ago, would not have raised them even to the rank of miniken MEN OF STRAW.

VERSE SIXTH.

Of the chiliads who carry arms, few obtain an enviable niche in the Temple of Fame. The bubble called military glory, can only be caught, as it rises out of a casual event, by a child of chance, who may be dignified with the appellation of an invincible man-at-arms, whilst in reality he is only a subservient Prig, who, at the word of command, will wheel to the right or to the left, to sabre or to shoot for he knows not what, nor cares he whom—just as the eddy of the morning breeze presents the mimic popgun, or wields the truncheon of the Farmer's *Field-Marshal*—I mean the military-like mounted Jackanapes MAN OF STRAW.

VERSE SEVENTH.

The Saviour of Mankind came into the world and died for sinners out of every denomination. Why then should the clergymen of Rome assert that the souls of millions,

who do not believe in their doctrine of Transubstantiation, are gibbeted in tar and feathers along the Popish road to Heaven—or the Protestant preacher assure his followers that the streets of Hell are paved with the skulls of Priests; whilst the Libertine laughs at all religion as an idle fantasy, and even asserts that Satan himself is nothing more than just a shaveling MAN OF STRAW?

VERSE EIGHTH.

Be not offended, oh ye great ones! at your effigies having been thus brought into view—nor attempt now, I redd ye! to burn in ire the shreds and chaff which the winter blast soon may scatter for aye; lest, when summer returns, and other duds are collected, and other Scarecrows made, ye may in due time re-appear among the many thousands destined to be likened, perhaps, to more offensive emblematic MEN OF STRAW.

END OF CHAPTER FIRST.

Mr Train wrote the tale of “Mysic and the Minister,” which appeared in the 30th Number of *Chambers's Journal*—“The Knight of the Round Tower,” in *Bennet's Glasgow Magazine, &c.* But the chief work in which he has been engaged since his retirement from the Excise, is a “History of the Isle of Man,” from the earliest periods. The manuscript is now, we believe, nearly ready for press; and, when published, will form two pretty large volumes.

In glancing back over this imperfect sketch, we are surprised how, amid the constant exercise of harassing professional duty, Mr Train could devote so much leisure and means to antiquarian inquiries; some of them, as we have seen, both important and difficult. He must have been indefatigable in his labours, and frugal in his expenditure. The acquisition of wealth was no object to him; and the manner in which his time and talents were devoted to the service of others, argues the disinterested kindness of his disposition. The vast fund of material collected by Mr Train, if published by himself, would have added immeasurably to his fame as well as fortune; but it is to be trusted the world will not be slow to acknowledge the debt of gratitude due to him.

We might here close our hurried though somewhat lengthy memoir, but we cannot do so without adverting to the domestic circle of Mr Train. He married, in 1803, Mary, eldest daughter of the late Mr Robert Wilson, gardener in Ayr, by whom

he has had five children. His eldest son William, in whom Sir Walter Scott expressed a warm interest, became Cashier in the Southern Bank, Dumfries, and was lately appointed one of the Inspectors of the National Provincial Bank of England. On leaving Dumfries, he was entertained at a public supper by a numerous party of friends, to whom he had endeared himself by his uniform propriety and excellent deportment. Like his father, he is also a Poet, and has written several pieces of merit. The following beautiful lines are from his pen:—

“ THE HILLS OF GALLOWAY.

(*From the Dumfries and Galloway Courier.*)

Farewell, ye Hills of Galloway,
 Where I've been wont to stray—
 Farewell, ye Hills of Galloway,
 My home of childhood's day—
 A distant land now claims me,
 But thither though I roam,
 My throbbing heart will beat with joy
 For thee, my hilly home !

Ye heather Hills of Galloway—
 Ye woods of oak and pine—
 Ye little foaming cataracts—
 Ye all are friends of mine !
 The eagle haunts your highest peak—
 The swan your lake below ;
 And herds of stately deer are fed
 Where Fleet's dark waters flow !

Ye cloud-capt Hills of Galloway,
 Where wildest breezes blow,
 The mists of heav'n that rest on you
 A weather-beacon show.
 The peasant dwelling in the vale,
 Reads in each rock and dell
 Aerial lore—vicissitudes
 That coming change foretell.

Ye ancient Hills of Galloway,
 How changed your aspect now,
 From what it was in former times—
 When round your rugged brow
 One universal forest waved,
 The native moose-deer's home,

And where the hardy wild Scot loved
In liberty to roam !

Ye ancient Hills of Galloway,
How proudly now ye rise
Above the rude and lonely graves
Of former enemies !
How proudly now your bosoms swell
In freedom's present hour—
Though studded close with remnants still
Of what *was* Roman power.

Ye sea-girt Hills of Galloway,
How nobly forth ye stand—
As if defying ev'ry foe
To gain your ancient strand.
There's liberty in ev'ry breath
That stirs your forest tree !
There's liberty in ev'ry wave
That greets you from the sea !

Then farewell ! farewell ! Galloway,
My blessing with thee rest ;
I go to visit other climes—
I go to be their *guest*.
For not another spot shall claim
A dearer name from me,
My only true—my native home,
Sweet Galloway—is thee.

Castle-Douglas.

W. TRAIN."

THE following passages, in reference to MR TRAIN, selected from the collective edition of the *Waverley Novels*, &c., and from Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, fully bear out the statements in the preceding sketch :—

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

" I am bound, in particular, to acknowledge the kindness of Mr Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Dumfries, to whose unwearied industry I have been indebted for many curious traditions and points of antiquarian interest. It was Mr Train who brought to my recollection *Old Mortality*."—*Waverley Novels*, vol. xli. pp. 13, 14.

OLD MORTALITY.

“ The remarkable figure and occupation of this ancient pilgrim was recalled to my memory by an account transmitted by my friend Mr Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Dumfries, to whom I owe many obligations of a similar nature. While these sheets were passing through the press, I received the following communication from Mr Train.”—*Waverley Novels*, vol. ix. p. 227.

GUY MANNERING.

“ A person well known by the name of Buckharteau, from having been a noted smuggler of that article, and also by that of Bogle-Bush, the place of his residence, assured my kind informant, Mr Train, that he had frequently seen upwards of two hundred Lingtow-men assemble at one time, and go off into the interior of the country, fully laden with contraband goods.” [Then follow the stories communicated by Mr Train relative to Hawkins the Dutch skipper, who was the prototype of Dirk Haiteerick, and of Willie Marshall the Gallovidian tinker.]—*Waverley Novels*, vol. iv. pp. 374, 375, 376, 377.

HEART OF MID-LOTHIAN.

“ The following account, furnished by the persevering kindness of Mr Train, contains all that can probably now be known of her history, though many, among whom is the author, may remember having heard of *Fleckless Fannie* in the days of their youth.”—*Waverley Novels*, vol. xiii. p. 36.

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

“ About the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Earl of Derby, being a fiery young chief, fond of war and honour, made a furious inroad with all his forces into the Stewartry of Kirkeudbright, and committed great ravages, still remembered in Manx song. Mr Train, with his usual kindness, sent me the following literal translation of the verses.”—*Waverley Novels*, vol. xxix. pp. 174, 175.

SURGEON'S DAUGHTER.

The following paragraph was written immediately before Sir Walter's last departure for the Continent. “ The author has nothing to say now in reference to this Novel, but that the principal incident on which it turns, was narrated to him one morning at breakfast by his worthy friend Mr Train of Castle-Douglas, in Galloway, whose kind assistance he has so often had occasion to acknowledge in the course of these prefaces.”—*Waverley Novels*, vol. xlviii. p. 150.

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

“ The following are the words of an ingenious correspondent, to whom I am obliged for much information”—[communication here inserted at length]—“ Letter from Mr Joseph Train of Newton Stewart, author of an ingenious collection of Poems, illustrative of many ancient traditions in Galloway and Ayrshire. Edinburgh, 1814.” [“ Mr Train made a journey into Ayrshire at Sir Walter Scott's request, on purpose to collect accurate information for the notes to this poem: and the reader will find more of the fruits of his labours in the Appendix, Note K: This is the same gentleman whose

friendly assistance is so often acknowledged in the Notes and Introductions of the Waverley Novels.”]—*Note by the Editor*, pp. 196, 197.

“The same obliging correspondent, whom I have quoted in the preceding note, gives me the following account of the present state of the ruins of Turnberry.”—p. 199.

“It is generally known that Bruce, in consequence of his distresses after the battle of Methven, was affected by a scorbutic disorder, which was called a leprosy. It is said he experienced benefit from the use of a medicinal spring, about a mile north of the town of Ayr, called from that circumstance King’s Ease.* The following is the tradition of the country, collected by Mr Train.” [* Sir Walter Scott had mis-read Mr Train’s MS., which gave not *King’s Ease*, but *King’s Case*, i. e. *Casa Regis*, the name of the Royal foundation described below. Mr Train’s kindness enables the Editor to make this correction, 1833.”—*Note by the Editor*.]—*Sir Walter Scott’s Poetical Works*, vol. x. p. 329.

LOCKHART’S LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

VOL. III.

Pp. 306, 307,—Mr Lockhart describes the circumstance of Mr Train’s becoming acquainted with Sir Walter.

P. 308,—Refers to Mr Train’s contributions to the museum at Abbotsford.

P. 309,—Mr Train’s anecdotes concerning the Galloway Gipsies, and the local story of the Astrologer, on which Sir Walter founded the Novel of Guy Mannering.

P. 310,—Describes the information with which Mr Train furnished Sir Walter when he was about to compose the Lord of the Isles.

Pp. 315, 316,—Farther information respecting the Lord of the Isles and the Galloway Astrologer.

P. 405,—Ballad of the Astrologer on which Guy Mannering is founded.

VOL. IV.

P. 37,—Mr Train’s communications made use of in the Tales of my Landlord.

P. 38,—Describes Mr Train’s first interview with Sir Walter, after which Mr Lockhart says—“*To this intercourse with Mr Train we owe the whole machinery of the Tales of my Landlord, as well as the adoption of Claverhouse’s period for the scene of some of its first fictions. I think it highly probable that we owe a farther obligation to the worthy Supervisor’s presentation of Rob Roy’s spleuchan.*”

P. 52,—Refers to the story of the *Baron of Plunton*, on which the melodrama of the Doom of Devorgoil is founded. An outline of this story is given in a letter addressed to Daniel Terry, commencing p. 53.

VOL. V.

Pp. 526, 527,—Description of the Chair which Mr Train presented to Sir Walter Scott.

VOL. VII.

P. 21,—Referring to the twenty persons who were in the secret of the Waverley Novels, previous to the catastrophe of 1826, Mr Lockhart says—“I am by no means sure that I can give a correct list, but, in addition to the members of Sir Walter’s own family, there were, Constable, Cadell, the two Ballantynes, Terry, Laidlaw, Mr Train, Charles Duke of Buccleuch,” &c.

SIR ALEXANDER BOSWELL, BART.,

OF AUCHINLECK.

IT is rather surprising that none of the literary friends of the late Sir Alexander Boswell have as yet attempted a collection of his writings. Several of his lyrical effusions have been long popular; and he was known to devote no inconsiderable portion of his leisure hours to pursuits of a more erudite description than the occasional cultivation of the muse. It is chiefly in relation to his character as a Poet, however, that he falls within the scope of the present work; yet, limited as the task thus naturally becomes, we are not sure that we possess materials for the proper execution of more than a brief outline of his literary character or history. Indeed, without access to the cabinet of the late Baronet, it would be impossible to do that justice to his reputation which some future and more favoured biographer may have the gratification of performing.

The family of the Boswells is of considerable antiquity in this country, tracing as it does its Norman origin to the days of William the Conqueror. The lands of Balmuto, in Fife, were acquired by Roger de Boswell, or Bosville, in the reign of David I., and it is from this stock that the Auchinleck branch proceeds. Thomas, second son of the eleventh inheritor of Balmuto, having become attached to the Court of James IV., obtained from that monarch the lands of Auchinleck, previously in possession of a family of the "same name with the lands, but which had become forfeited to the crown."* Thomas, who married a daughter of Sir Hew Campbell of Loudoun, was "slain in battle, fighting along with his sovereign at the fatal field of Flodden."

ALEXANDER BOSWELL, the subject of our memoir, was born on

* Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. The Laird of Auchinleck (of that Ilk) is mentioned in the wars of Sir William Wallace, as one of the companions in arms of the Scottish patriot.

the 9th of October 1775. He was the eldest son of the well-known biographer of Dr Johnson, and grandson of Lord Auchinleck,* one of the Senators of the College of Justice. His mother, a daughter of Sir Walter Montgomery, Bart. of Lainshaw, † was a woman in several respects the very opposite of his father, possessing a warmth of feeling and a soundness of judgment which at once rendered her manner dignified and agreeable. ‡ Alexander, together with his only brother James, was educated in England, first at Westminster School and afterwards at the University of Oxford; and, on the death of his father in 1795, succeeded, ere he had completed his twentieth year, to the paternal estate. Having made a tour of Europe about that period, he subsequently resided chiefly at Auchinleck, and was early distinguished in the county of Ayr as a gentleman of much spirit, warmth of heart, and public enterprise. In his character may be said to have been combined the best qualities of his father, without his frivolities. Together with a large share of the genius, he inherited his fondness for literature; and, amid the accumulated stores of the "Auchinleck Library"—one of the most valuable private collections in the country—he had ample opportunity of

* On the authority of Sir Walter Scott, Mr Croker gives the following characteristic anecdote of this eminent lawyer, who appears to have looked upon Dr Johnson and some of the other companions of his son with contempt:—"Old Lord Auchinleck was an able lawyer and good scholar, after the manner of Scotland, and highly valued, on his own advantages, as a man of good estate and ancient family; and, moreover, as he was a strict Presbyterian, and a Whig of the old Scottish cast. This did not prevent his being a terrible proud aristocrat; and great was the contempt he entertained and expressed for his son James, for the nature of his friendships, and the character of the personages of whom he was *engoue* one after another. 'There's nae hope for Jamie, man,' he said to a friend; 'Jamie has gaen clean gyte. What do you think, man, he's done wi' Paoli? He's aff wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinned himself to now, man?' Here the old judge summed up, with a sneer of most sovereign contempt—'a *dominie*, man—an auld *dominie*; he kepted a *schule* and called it an *academy*!'"

† This property was purchased by William Cunninghame, father of the present possessor, from Sir Walter, in 1779.

‡ Mrs Boswell was not without a vein of pleasantry, sarcastic or otherwise, as occasion dictated. In allusion to the influence of Johnson over her husband, she one day remarked, while the Doctor sojourned at Auchinleck, that "she had seen many a bear led by a man, but had never before seen a man led by a bear."

gratifying his taste for antiquarian research. The muse, however, seems to have early claimed his attention; and though unwilling perhaps publicly to commit himself as a Poet, his efforts in that way were well known in the circle of his acquaintances. He was a warm admirer of Burns, and to this feeling perhaps we owe several Scottish songs from his pen, scarcely less national and popular than those of Coila's Bard himself. Among these may be mentioned "Jenny's Bawbee:"—

“ I met four chieils you birks amang,
 Wi' hanging lugs and faces lang :
 I spier'd at neighbour Bauldy Strang,
 What are they—these we see ?
 Quoth he, ilk cream-faced pauky chiel
 Thinks himsel' eunnin' as the deil,
 And here they cam' awa' to steal
 Jenny's bawbee.”

The idea of this song, as observed by Allan Cunningham, was probably suggested to Sir Alexander by the following lines of an old fragment, familiar to most Scottish ears:—

“ An' a' that e'er my Jenny had,
 My Jenny had, my Jenny had ;
 A' that e'er my Jenny had,
 Was ae bawbee.
 There's your plack and my plack,
 An' your plack and my plack,
 An' my plack and your plack,
 An' Jenny's bawbee.”

But, though indebted to an old rhyme for the air and “o'erword,” as Burns was in some of the most delightful of his lyrics, the song is in every other feature original. The group of lovers whom he represents as in search of “Jenny's Bawbee,” are entirely his own, and so characteristic as not to admit of doubt that they are real portraits.* We have heard it stated that the heroine who figures under the homely designation of “Jenny,” was no less a

* In a note to this song, first published by the author in 1803, Sir Alexander gave the following explanation:—“As this song has been very unfairly interpreted, the author takes this opportunity of unequivocally disavowing any allusion to individuals. Let the blame rest with those who applied it, and those who felt the application.”

personage than the late Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop. "Auld Gude-man, ye're a Drucken Carle" is another well-known song by Sir Alexander; and the following version of "Jenny Dang the Weaver," is also the offspring of his muse:—

" At Willie's wedding o' the green,
The lasses, bonnie witches,
Were busked out in aprons clean,
And snaw-white Sunday natches.
Auld Mysie bade the lads tak' tent,
But Jock wad na believe her;
But soon the fool his folly kent,
For—Jenny dang the weaver.

In ilka country dance and reel
Wi' her he wad be babbin';
When she sat down, then he sat down,
And till her wad be gabbin';
Whare'er she gaed, or butt or ben,
The coof wad never leave her,
Aye cacklin' like a clockin' hen—
But Jenny dang the weaver.

Quoth he, ' My lass, to speak my mind,
Gude haith I needna swither,
Ye've bonnie een, and, gif ye're kind,
I needna court anither.'
He humm'd and haw'd—the lass cried plough,
And bade the fool no deave her,
Then crack'd her thumb, and lap, and leugh,
And dang the silly weaver."*

* The origin of the air of "Jenny Dang the Weaver," is somewhat curious:—The Rev. Mr Gardner, minister of the parish of Birse, in Aberdeenshire, well known for his musical talent and for his wit, was one Saturday evening arranging his ideas for the service of the following day in his little study, which looked into the court-yard of the manse, where Mrs Gardner *secunda*—for he had been twice married—was engaged in the homely task of "beetling" the potatoes for supper. To unbend his mind a little, he took up his Cremona, and began to step over the notes of an air he had previously jotted down, when suddenly an altercation arose between Mrs Gardner and Jock, the "minister's man"—an idle sort of weaver from the neighbouring village of Marywell, who had lately been engaged as man of all work about the manse. "Here, Jock," cried the mistress, as he had newly come in from the labours of the field, "gac wipe the minister's shoon." "Na," said the lout, "I'll do nae sic thing—I can' here to be yir ploughman, but no yir flunky; and I'll be d——d gif I'll wipe the minister's shoon!" "Deil confound yir impudence!" said the enraged Mrs Gardner, as she sprung

In 1803, he gave to the public, anonymously however, a small volume of lyrics, entitled "Songs, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect," stating, by way of apology in the preface, that as several of the songs had been printed without the author's permission, and with alterations which he did not consider as improvements, he had been induced to present them to the public in a more correct form. In this little volume, besides the popular songs already mentioned, there are several others of no inconsiderable merit. "Taste Life's Glad Moments" * is a well-known convivial song. "The Old Chieftain to his Sons," in which the following beautiful sentiment occurs, has also appeared in more than one collection :—

" The auld will speak, the young maun hear,
Be canty, but be gude an' leal ;
Your ain ill's aye ha'e heart to bear,
Anither's aye ha'e heart to feel."

In "The Change of Edinburgh," the regret of the octogenarian is happily expressed :—

" Heeh ! what a change ha'e we now in this town !
A' now are braw lads, the lasses a' glauncin' ;
Folk maun be dizzie gaun aye in the roun',
For deil a haet's done now but feastin' and dancin'.

Gowd's no that scanty in ilk siller pock,
When ilka bit laddie maun ha'e his bit stagie ;
But I kent the day when there was nae a Jock
But trotted about upon honest shanks-nagie.

Little was stown then, and less gaed to waste,
Barely a mulin' for mice or for rattens,
The thrifty housewife to the flesh-market paced,
Her equipage a'—just a gude pair o' pattens.

Folk were as good then, and friends were as leal,
Though coaches were scant, wi' their cattle a-canterin' ;

at him with the heavy culinary instrument in her hand ; and, giving him a hearty beating, compelled him to perform the menial duty required. The minister, highly diverted with the scene, gave the air he had just completed the title of "Jenny Dang the Weaver." This is supposed to have occurred about the year 1746.

* This song, as stated by Boswell himself, was translated from the German, while at Leipsig, on his Continental tour, in 1795.

Right air we were telt by the housemaid or chiel,
Sir, an ye please, here's yir lass and a lantern.

The town may be clouted and picced till it meets
A' neebours benorth and besouth without haltin',
Brigs may be biggit owre lums and owre streets,
The Nor-loch itsel' heaped heigh as the Calton :

But whar is true friendship, and whar will ye see
A' that is gude, honest, modest, and thrifty ?
Tak' gray hairs and wrinkles, and hirple wi' me,
And think on the seventeen hundred and fifty."

To those acquainted with the localities of the Scottish metropolis, the allusions in the song will be perfectly intelligible. The space formerly occupied by the Nor-loch has been converted into a beautiful shrubbery ; and the Mound—now an important thoroughfare, whereon stands one of the finest buildings in Edinburgh, the Royal Institution of Arts—was scarcely more than formed when the author wrote. The change which has come over the town, even since the days of the Poet, are calculated still more to efface the old-fashioned appearance of the city. The remodeling of the Parliament Square—the removal of the West Bow—and many other improvements, have no doubt tended to modernize and beautify the ancient part of the metropolis ; still there are few genuine antiquaries but would have preferred the dingy mass in all its original obliquity and confusion.

Before dismissing the small volume now in our hands, we may give one other extract from its pages, in a very different style and spirit from any of the former. It is

“ SHELAH O'NEAL.*

Oft I went to her,
To sigh and to woo her ;
Of mighty fine things did I say a great deal ;
Above all the rest,
What still pleased her the best,
Was—' Och ! will you marry me, Shelah O'Neal ?'

My point I soon carried,
For fast we got married ;
The weight o' my bargain I then 'gan to feel ;

* The air is composed by the author.

She scolded and fisted,
 O then I enlisted,
 Left Ireland, and whisky, and Shelah O'Neal.

But, tired and dull-hearted,
 My corps I deserted,
 And fled off to regions far distant from home,
 To Frederick's army,
 Where nought was to harm me,
 Not the devil himself in the shape of a bomb.

I fought every battle,
 Where cannon did rattle,
 Felt sharp-shot, alas! and their sharp-pointed steal;
 But in all their wars round,
 Thank my stars, I ne'er found
 Ought so sharp as thy tongue, O cursed Shelah O'Neal!"

In 1803, soon after the publication of the songs, appeared from the press of Mundell & Son, Edinburgh, a ballad by Sir Alexander, entitled "The Spirit of Tintoc; or, Johnnie Bell and the Kelpie," with notes, 16 pp. 8vo. In the preface it is stated that the ballad was "found by accident in his paternal repository." There is little doubt, however, that it is one of his own. The subject is founded on the following nursery rhyme:—

"On Tintoc* tap there is a mist,
 And in the mist there is a kist,
 And in the kist there is a cap,
 And in the cap there is a drap;
 Tak' up the cap, sup up the drap,
 And set the cap on Tintoc tap."

The story is the adventurous undertaking of a drouthy tailor, who resolved to quench his thirst from the magic cap:—

"Johnnie Bell was the gudeman's name,
 The wife's, I wot, was Kate M'Crae;
 He was a tailor, to his shame
 A tippling tailor, neighbours say."

His guest, auld Robin Scot, having emptied the graybeard at the first quaff, to the great mortification of the tailor, the latter exclaims—

* Tintoc is a mountain in the higher part of Lanarkshire.

“ The graybeard’s toom, I maun ha’e drink ;
 I’ve no a plack to buy a drap ;
 My heart is up, and away I’ll link,
 There’s drink for nought on Tintoc tap.”

The ballad then goes on to describe how, having put on his blue bonnet, and armed himself with a “ rown-tree-staff,” the courageous tailor set out on his adventure—how he espied what he thought to be the deil, but which fortunately turned out to be a *craw*—how he fell into the burn, and was seized by the Water Kelpie, when the Brownie having whistled in his ear—

“ He mutter’d thrice the magic spell—
 Thrice Cockatrice and Gallowlee,
 When Kelpie shriek’d—‘ O Johnnie Bell
 My charm is broken—you are free ! ’ ”

Gaining at length the summit of the hill after much toilsome clambering, and having fortified himself with a “ quid o’ the right Virginia,” Stilla, (for still,) “ Queen of the spirits of fire,” appears to him, and bids him begone ; but bold Johnnie Bell, not so easily to be daunted, defies the Queen and all the race of weird sisters, whom he overcomes by repeating the mystical words “ Gallowlee and Cockatrice.” Thus compelled, and Stilla having

“ ———Stamp’d on the grassless yeard,
 A fire and cauldron quick arose ;
 The tailor rubb’d his head and beard,
 And lick’d his lips, and cock’d his nose.

The fire low’d, and the cauldron hiss’d,
 And the hell-steam rose baith red and blue,
 When the guardian spirit of the kist
 Swell’d to the wond’ring tailor’s view.

His hair was red, and his cheekbones high,
 And he look’d like a new-caught Highlandman ;
 His eyes in their sockets seem’d to fry ;
 He smelt like a peat-reck warming pan.

* * *

The lid o’ the kist wi’ a clap flew up—
 And fon to the brim out flew the cap ;
 The thirsty tailor at ae sup
 Drank it a’, baith dreg and drap.

The kist and cap, and cantrip spell,
 Wi' whizzing birr, in flinders flew ;
 But what became o' Johnnie Bell,
 Gude kens ! I ken nae mair than you !"

So much for the tale of Tintoc Tap. In 1810, was published "Edinburgh, or the Ancient Royalty, a Sketch of former Manners, with Notes, by Simon Gray," in which an old farmer and a city friend discourse on the nature of the changes that have taken place within their remembrance, and which are strikingly contrasted with the existing habits of the modern Athenians. This little work contains some curious memorials of the simple manners of former times, and, like all the former publications of Sir Alexander, it was given to the world anonymously. In 1811, however, there issued from the press of George Ramsay and Company, "Clan-Alpin's Vow : a Fragment,"* with the name of the author prefixed. The story is founded on an incident in the history of the Clan-Alpin, which occurred about 1589. One of that notable sept having killed John Drummond, a forester of Glenartney, while in search of venison for the marriage banquet of James VI., whose Queen was shortly expected from Denmark, the Laird of M'Grigor, and "the hail surname of M'Gri-gors, purposely conveyed upon the next Sunday yrafter at the Kirk of Buckquidder," where, the head of Drummond having been "pointed to them," each man laid his "hand upon the pow," swearing to defend their companion who had done the deed, equally from the law and against all who might attempt to demand justice. The poem is good, in so far as mere poetry is concerned ; but the introductory portion of it is by far too promising for the *denouement*. The reader feels disappointed that the stirring historical incidents with which it opens, have almost no connexion whatever with the close. The subject might have been wrought up into a long and interesting romance.

"Sir Albon" is another poetical fragment, privately printed about the same period, and inscribed to Captain, afterwards Colonel Miller, of the first regiment of guards. The poem is intended as a satire on Sir Walter Scott's poetical romances, and

* A London edition of this poem was printed by Bentley & Son, in 1817.

affords a very fair specimen of the author's talent for light composition. As the piece is short, and exceedingly scarce, from having been subsequently suppressed, we shall insert the whole of it :—

“ *February 27, 1803.*

Enough of rain, of hail, and snow,
 Has drench'd the regions here below.
 The lark soars high, and sings in air ;
 The thrush begins her tender care ;
 The soft breeze whispers through the bough ;
 And busy crows pursue the plough.
 When ev'ry songster strains its throat,
 Shall silent be the minstrel's note ?
 High swells his soul, so swell his song,
 And ev'ry rock the strain prolong.

To thee, my M****r, shall I paint,
 With willing hand but colours faint,
 The joys that crowd our sylvan scene,
 The rushing river, laurels green,
 The time-worn bridge, romantic mill,
 The rocks, and banks, and Lockhart-hill ?—
 Or shall I rouse the sportman's shout
 When many a grawl, and many a trout,
 By net resistless dragg'd to shore,
 Adds to the well-fill'd larder's store ?—
 Or when the moorcock skims the heath
 On rapid wing, more rapid death
 O'ertakes the fugitive—he dies,
 And the serf lifts the feather'd prize ?—
 Or when September's new-born day
 Gives partridges as legal prey,
 Shall dogs and hackbuts pass unsung,
 The steady point—the covey sprung—
 Now right—now left—a brace are down,
 With horseshoe breast and scarlet crown ?—
 Or shall I mark, on high Stairaird,
 The hare steal off from Bauldy Baird,
 Just when he meditates the feat
 To shoot her cow'ring in her seat ?—
 Or when the wintry wind bereaves
 The copsewood of its wreck of leaves ;
 When men and dogs, a busy rout,
 Try ev'ry holly-bush about ;
 When the moon's light conducts the flock,
 And ev'ry bank can boast a cock ?—

With spring elastic up he darts,
 ' Mark ! mark ! ' they cry, then beat all hearts ;
 Like lightning (such the rapid view),
 The sportsman pours the pellets through ;
 And as he falls, to rise no more,
 Curses th' inhospitable shore
 Which dooms him, far from Lapland's coast,
 To stretch his limbs on—butter toast !

And now, ere drops my feeble wing,
 My blessing take. Go, serve the king ;
 Forget the soft Sicilian fair,
 The Marchesina's grace and air,
 And set your heart on British stuff,
 For surely they're quite good enough.
 So—savoury be each well-cook'd dish !
 If ought avails the minstrel's wish.

L'ARGUMENT PROSAIQUE.

The Camperdown coach stops to water the horses in a village, at M'Lellan's door, publican and butcher—SIR ALBON jumps out, mounts a hack—canters up the causeway—passes the door of the Clerk of the Roads—sees the light of Muirkirk Ironworks—passes Kinzencleugh and Ballochmyle, and arrives at the How-foord. —Distance, one mile—time, six minutes.

SIR ALBON.

Swift o'er heav'n's arch the streamers ran,
 While slowly moved the caravan.
 Sudden, unbid, the leaders stood
 Before thy gate, O man of blood !
 If ought did there the curb branch ply,
 'Twas hand unseen by mortal eye ;
 If ought did *esse* and *crochet* * strain,
 'Twas hand unhallow'd drew the rein.

Swift to his steed SIR ALBON sprung,
 Beneath his feet the trap-stone † rung ;
 For rapid was the courser's stroke,
 And ev'ry wight whose sleep it broke,
 By sudden start on elbow raised,
 Breathed a half-stiffed ' GUDE BE PRAISED.'
 Quicker than cloth-yard arrow's flight
 De Wodrow's mansion pass'd Sir Knight,
 And quicker than the drum-boy's ruff
 His horse-hoofs clatter'd hard and tough. —

* *Esse* and *Crochet*, terms in the menage for the ends of the curb chain.

† Trap-stone—whinstone.

De Wodrow! though it mar my tale,
 To sing of thee can minstrel fail?
 For clerk he was, if clerk there be,
 Though little skill'd in minstrelsy,
 And less I wot in chivalry;
 But I may say, in sooth, he knew
 The magic powers of two and two,
 And four the wonderful result;
 And though in head no catapult
 To batter logic's ramparts down,
 Yet he might challenge fair renown;
 For well he conn'd the mystic page
 Of Cocker and of Dilworth sage;
 His cap could doff, his cap could don.——
 But to our tale—Sir Knight prick'd on.
 No light had he to cheer his way,
 Fled were the sunny joys of day,
 And not as yet the silv'ry moon
 To wayworn pilgrim gave the boon;
 Far in the east she linger'd still,
 Behind Cairntable's pointed hill,
 Or Tintoc brown, or Corsincone,
 Whilst ALBON, dauntless, rode alone.
 No faintly glimm'ring aid, to mark
 Each image in the poring dark,
 Save when the well-wrought bars of steel
 Which clad his trusty horse's heel,
 Drew from a stone the transient light
 Which brightest shines in darkest night:
 For, like that emblematic form
 Which led to Salem's tow'rs the storm,
 (And shall a Christian minstrel tell
 The triumphs of the infidel?)
 The horseshoc, fitted to defend,
 Like that bright moon in turn and bend,
 Of shape and light both emulous,
 Scatters its light most marvellous.

Far on the circle of the sky
 Sir Knight a gleaming light did spy;
 So vivid was its meteor gleam,
 That to some wights it well might seem
 The moon herself should shortly rise.
 Not so in brave SIR ALBON's eyes;
 For well he wist this lurid glare
 Burst from the source of classic Ayr,

Where, 'midst the bleak and barren wild,
 With Erebus' own hue defiled,
 The sons of Vulcan at the forge
 Their midnight massive hammers urge.

Fast and more fast his fleet horse flew,
 When sudden darting on his view
 A lonely light, that twinkled still,
 Tho' mansion mark'd of Dame M****.
 Its turrets mock'd his straining gaze ;
 But then he thought on ancient days,
 When lady fair was in her prime,
 Fit theme for youthful minstrel's rhyme :
 Then bow'd to her on bended kneec
 The Laird of hazel-clad G*****.
 Long, long, are all her suitors fled,
 Her beauty's fallen, wither'd, dead !

On, on he spurr'd, and pass'd the while
 Old Kinzenclough, and Ballochmyle
 In song renown'd, and then anon
 Was full in front of Willoxton.
 On that proud rock a castle stood,
 And frown'd upon the raging flood ;
 But how and when that castle fell
 I may not think, I may not tell.
 The flames bore ev'ry trace away ;
 But whence those flames I may not say.
 Now on its shrivell'd stunted oak
 Blood-sated ravens daily croak ;
 With gory beak and talons foul,
 There nightly screams a boding owl.
 SIR ALBON pass'd the rock below ;
 He heard the river's sullen flow,
 And high in air portentous sound
 In undulations hover'd round——
 But ever, as in time of need,
 SIR ALBON onward prick'd his steed.

THE BENISON ; OR, P.P.C.

And now, why farther swell my tonic ?
 Suffice it, ALBON canter'd home.
 What recks it in my simple tale,
 That ALBON supp'd and swallow'd ale ;
 Or, tired with travel and alone,
 Placed on his pate a cotton cone,
 And one of tin on candle's head,
 Then, peering, groped the way to bed ?

But, reader, ere we part, adieu !
 For I would part in peace with you.
 Take my potluck, 'tis good hotchpotch,
 A mess of Anglo-Gallie Scotch ;
 And if this sells, as sell it must,
 I soon shall touch, again, your *dust*.
 With wondrous speed, as I'm a sinner,
 I'll knock you up another dinner ;
 For thoughts fall quick from fertile brain,
 Like bright prismatic show'rs of rain—
 And I can write, with ready pen,
 For gentle maids and gentle men.
 Though poor the measures from my reed,
 Still poorer is your minstrel's meed :
 I ask but half-a-crown a line.
 The SONG be your's, the DISK* be mine.

In 1812, Sir Alexander gave to the world a fac-simile edition of the disputation between John Knox and Quentin Kennedy, at Maybole, in 1562—the only original copy of which then known to exist, was deposited in the paternal library at Auchinleck. † About the same period, he established a small printing-office at Auchinleck-House, from which he issued a variety of curious and interesting works, chiefly reprints of scarce and valuable tracts, for private circulation amongst his friends. Much of the hon. Baronet's time was in consequence occupied in performing the drudgery of revising and correcting the press. The first we have seen of the poetical productions printed at Auchinleck, is “ The Tyrant's Fall,” ‡ written immediately after the battle of Waterloo, in which he thus bewails the fate of his friend Lieut.-Colonel Miller, son of the venerable Lord Glenlee :—

“ Amidst the brave, whose fall bequeath'd
 For Britain's pride a theme so vast ;
 Shall not a sorrowing sigh be breathed
 For thee—a soldier to the last ?

Thee, Miller ! lost, lamented friend !
 Whose breast a patriot spirit fired ;

* Generally applied to a planet, but here to a half-crown piece.

† Since then another copy has been discovered. Sir Alexander also published an “ Oration of Quentin Kennedy,” and “ Memoriall of the Lyfe of Dr James Spottiswood, Bishop of Clogher,” both from original MSS. Constable was the publisher.

‡ Auchinleck : Printed by A. and J. Boswell, 1815.

Yes, o'er thy honour'd tomb we bend—
In life beloved, in death admired."

In 1816, Sir Alexander printed at the Auchinleck press a few copies of a poem written by himself, entitled "Skeldon Haughs, or the Sow is Flitted," a tale in rhyme, founded on an Ayrshire tradition of the fifteenth century. Not having seen the piece, we take the following account of it from the *Scottish Biographical Dictionary*, in which a brief memoir of Sir Alexander Boswell is given:—"Kennedy of Bargeny tethered a sow on the lands of his feudal enemy, Crawford of Kerse, and resolved that the latter gentleman, with all his vassals, should not be permitted to remove or 'flit' the animal. To defeat this bravado at the very first, the adherents of Crawford assembled in great force, and entered into active fight with the Kennedies, who, with their sow, were at length driven back with great slaughter, though not till the son of the Laird of Kerse, who had led his father's forces, was slain. The point of the poem lies in the dialogue which passed between the old man and a messenger who came to apprise him of the event:—

" ' Is the sow flitted? tell me, loon!
Is auld Kyle up and Carrick down?
Mingled wi' sobs, his broken tale
The youth began: ah, Kerse, bewail
This luckless day!—Your blythe son John,
Ah, wae's my heart, lies on the loan—
And he could sing like ony merle!
' Is the sow flitted?' cried the earle;
' Gie me my answer—short and plain—
Is the sow flitted? yammerin' wean!
' The sow (deil tak' her) 's owre the water,
And at their backs the Crawfords batter—
The Carrick couts are cowed and betted!
' My thumb for Jock! THE SOW IS FLITTED! "

Another poetical tale, similar in length and versification, entitled "The Woo'-Creel, or the Bill o' Bashan," issued from his private press in 1816.* It was inscribed to John Hamilton, Esq. of Sundrum; the "homely rhymes," as mentioned by the author,

* Auchinleck: Printed by James Sutherland, 1816. The poem appeared in the *Edinburgh Gazette* of the 10th December 1823.

being little more than “the versification of an old story” playfully related in a social hour by that gentleman. The story unfolds a rustic intrigue, in which, “auld Lowrie Weir” having returned unexpectedly from a distant market, the young gudewife is very much at a loss where to conceal her buirdly paramour; but

“ A woman’s wit aye stands the test ;—
 She whipt young Lowrie frae his nest,
 And, aye when the auld carle tirl’d
 Nippet the weanock till it skirl’d,
 To drown the bustle and the din
 Of him without and them within.
 ‘ Doil’d carle ! ’ quoth she, ‘ back sae soon !
 O Dannie, Dannie, we’re undone !
 Or butt or ben, there’s no ae neuk
 To hide a chiel o’ sic a buik ;
 For gudesake man, fye, haste ye speel,
 And hide up in the big woo’-creel ;
 My wearied man belyve will snore,
 Syne ye may slip out at the door.’—
 ‘ Woo’-creel ! ’ quoth Dan, (and swore an aith,)
 ‘ The black Mahoun may tak’ ye baith ;
 A bonnie berth for me, I trow,
 Aboon the reek, among foul woo’,
 Foul braxy dirt, ’twad smoor a sow ;
 Sooner than do sic fool-like biddin’
 I’ll ding the carle out owre the midden.’—
 ‘ O dinna,’ quo’ she, ‘ be a fool,
 Fye haste, ye maun draw in the stool.—
 The carle roar’d the carle rappit,
 Dan drew the stool and up he stappit ;
 And clamber’d to the creel, right fain
 That he war ance weel out again.

Nanse to the door now glegly ran—
 ‘ Hech ! safe us a’, is’t you, gudeman ?
 Ye raised up sic an awsome din,
 I thought ’twas thieves that would be in.’—
 ‘ Thieves ! ’ quotha, ‘ truth ye are na blate,
 Sae lang to gar a body wait,
 And thole the rain and bitter blast ;
 Mair peats upon the ingle east,
 And ripe the ribs, and gie’s a low,’—
 Syne rubb’d his hands and droukit pow.
 The heapot peats began to bleeze,
 To warm the carle, but Nan to freeze ;

For, keekin' up, a fearsome sight
 For her, glanced by the glimm'ring light ;
 To hide her fright, she tuke to singing,
 For—owre the creel Dan's leg was hinging :

SANG.

' Balow, my babe, balow, balow ;
 My bonnie babe, balow, balow ;
 My sonsie lad, balow, balow :
 And 'twas aye, draw in yir leg, my joe.'

Dan took the hint, the leg drew in,
 And co'er'd he was frae heel to chin ;
 But, keekin' cannie owre the creel,
 He wish'd skulduddery at the deil ;
 The ingle low'd, the wat peats reekit,
 And restless Dan, half-smoor'd, half-smeekeit,
 Began to hotch, and writhe, and wrastle,
 And wish'd himsel' at Cumnock Castle,
 At Straid, Polwhyrter, or Monaicht,
 Poulosh, Brydesbank, Leinmark, or Laight,
 Or ony spot in a' the shire
 But in a creel aboon a fire.

What mortal should o' safety brag ?
 By gude strae-rape, out owre a knag,
 Hang the woo'-creel, weel pack'd and fou',
 Ten stane* o' flesh, twa stane o' woo' ;
 And when Dan's thoughts ran far awa',
 Doun wi' a brainge cam' creel an' a'.
 Ae grane he loot, but it was sture,
 And out he row'd on the clay floor ;
 His back was just ae gude braid fleesh
 O' tarry tates o' woo' and creesh ;
 He look'd, if ough ye could ca' like,
 A muckle towzie water-tyke ;
 And aff he bang'd, ne'er keek'd ahint him,
 The earle in a jiffey tint him.—
 ' Losh !' cried the wife, ' some deed ye've dune,
 That brings sic ferlies frae the moon ;
 O, Lowrie ! a black hour is come,
 When deils come rowin' doun the lum ;
 Rin, Lowrie, rin, for *Mess John Hunter*,
 Be't deil or witch he can confront her,

* TROU.

Gar spirits skelp to Egypt's coast,
To soom wi' Pharaoh and his host.'

Poor Lowrie bicker'd to the manse,
But right and left whiles glowr'd askance ;
Back cam' the minister, I wat
He was the man to bell the cat
Wi' ony witch that ever flew
In hood o' red, and cloak o' blue.
He cursed, and blest, and exorcised—
Lowrie grew calm, the wife was pleased,
For ilka imp about the house
Slank aff like ratten, or like mouse.

Fools say—(a douse man scandal scorns)
That some anc left a pair o' horns
That stack, I canna tell ye how,
On unsuspectin' *Lowrie's* brow ;
Wha cares for claverin' and clashan',
And wha wad wyte the Bill o' Bashan ?''

Politics beginning to run high about this period (1816), Boswell, then member of Parliament for the county of Ayr, and firmly attached to Government, took an active part in opposing the democratical spirit which pervaded the country. The cry of *Reform* resounded throughout every corner of Scotland ; and the agitated state of the lower ranks of society was well calculated to carry alarm into the higher. Holding the rank of Lieut.-Colonel in the Ayrshire yeomanry cavalry, which had been called into existence some years prior, no man could be more enthusiastic in the service. Both in personal appearance and in temperament, he exhibited the bearing of a thorough soldier. Strong and athletic in body, he had all the enthusiasm and ardour of courage necessary to constitute the successful leader of a daring enterprise. Much of his time was devoted to the training of his men ; and perhaps no similar body in the country could surpass those troops more immediately under his superintendence, in discipline and all the essentials of an efficient force. The prospect of civil disturbances, from 1817 till 1821, rendered the yeomanry display not altogether an idle one ; and few there are, we believe, who did not entertain the fear that a collision would be unavoidable. A few days before the expected revolt, on the 1st of April 1820,

we well recollect seeing Sir Alexander at the head of his men on their way for Paisley; and certain we are no cavalier of former times could have been inspired by a greater ardour of loyalty, or maintained a more erect and undaunted carriage. Fortunately for the country, the crisis passed over without the necessity of drawing a sword—with the exception of the trifling affair of Bonnymuir—save for the purpose of quelling mobs, or guarding prisoners. As a proof of the estimation in which he was held by the corps, we may mention that there was presented to him, in the month of March 1820, a valuable gold snuff-box, “as a mark of their esteem for him as a man and an officer.”

Amid the din of political strife, however, Boswell still found leisure to cultivate his literary pursuits, and to interest himself in the affairs of the county. One object dear to his heart was the erection of a suitable monument to the memory of Burns. Having long conceived that Ayrshire was faulty in this respect, he succeeded, after several years of almost single-handed exertion, in raising a fund for the purpose; and, on the 25th of January 1820, he had the peculiar satisfaction, as Deputy Grand-Master of the ancient Mother Lodge at Kilwinning, of laying the foundation-stone of the monument, which is now one of the chief ornaments of the Poet's birthplace, amid an imposing masonic display, and surrounded by a vast concourse of spectators.

In 1821, the loyalty and public services of Boswell were rewarded by a Baronetcy. Unfortunately the political calm which followed the suppression of the Radicals in 1820, had begun some time prior to be disturbed by renewed agitation and personal attacks on the part of a portion of the press: and, in order to combat the liberal party with their own weapons, a newspaper was started in Edinburgh, under the title of the *Beacon*. To this shortlived but somewhat celebrated journal, Sir Alexander was a contributor. The *Beacon* was succeeded by the *Sentinel*, another journal of similar principles and character, published in Glasgow, to which he also gave his support. Some of the *jeux-d'esprit*, supposed to have been communicated by Sir Alexander, were calculated to give offence—the following especially, suggested by occurrences connected with the *Beacon*:—

“ WHIG SONG.

Supposed to be written by one of the James's, certainly not by King James I., or King James V., but probably by one of the House of Stuart.

TUNE—*Sheriff Muir.*

There's some say that they're Whigs,
 And some say that we're Whigs,
 And some say there's nae Whigs ava, man ;
 But ae thing I'm sure,
 A pauky Whig do-er
 'S the Whig that out-whiggifies a', man.

Chorus.

And they crack and we ta'k,
 And they ta'k and we crack,
 And we ta'k and they crack awa', man.

For *conscience* the *auld* Whigs
 Were *sterlin'* and bauld Whigs,
 And gied their oppressors a claw, man ;
 But *now* Whigs for *siller*,
 (Their calf on the pillar,)
 Ken nought about conscience ava, man.
 And they crack and we ta'k, &c.

The deil took the lawyer,
 And left the poor sawyer ;
 He was na a mouse to his paw, man ;
 Owre straught was his mark, man,
 But a Whig Signet Clerk, man,
 Can ony thing ony way thraw, man.
 And they crack and we ta'k, &c.

They rant about Freedom,
 But when ye ha'e fee'd 'em,
 Cry het or cry cauld, and they'll blaw, man ;
 Tak' him maist rampagant,
 And mak' him king's agent ;
 And, heh, how his fury will fa', man !
 And they crack and we ta'k, &c.

There's Stot-Feeder Stuart,
 Kent for that Fat Cow—art,
 How glegly he kicks ony ba', man ;
 And Gibson, lang chiel, man,

Whase height might serve weel, man,
 To read his ain name on a wa', man.
 And they crack and we ta'k, &c.

Your knights o' the pen, man,
 Are a' *gentlemen*, man,
 Ilk *body's* a *limb* o' the law, man ;
 Tacks, bonds, precognitions,
 Bills, wills, and petitions,
 And *ought* but a *trigger* some draw, man.
 And they crack and we ta'k, &c.

Sae foul fa' backbiters,
 Wha rin down sic writers,
 Wha fatten sae brave and sae braw, man ;
 Ilk Whiggish believer,
 Ilk privileged riever,
 Come, join in a hearty huzza, man.
 For they crack and we ta'k," &c.

Levelled as this piece evidently was at James Stuart, Esq., younger of Duncarn, and that gentleman having traced the manuscript to Sir Alexander Boswell, a challenge was the unavoidable consequence. The parties accordingly met near the village of Auchtertool, in Fife, on the 26th of March 1822, when Sir Alexander fell, the ball of his opponent having entered near the root of the neck on the right side. The gallant Baronet was immediately carried to Balmuto, where he expired in the course of next day. Sir Alexander was attended by John Douglas, Esq., and Mr Stuart by the Earl of Rosslyn, as seconds. From the evidence adduced at the trial of Mr Stuart, it appears that Sir Alexander, on the way from the North Ferry to the ground, had intimated to Mr Douglas his intention not to fire. He said, "He had no ill-will at Mr Stuart—he had no wish to put his life in jeopardy, though in an unhappy moment he had injured him—he bore him no ill-will ; and, therefore, it was his determination to fire in the air." This of course was unknown to the opposite parties.

Thus closed abruptly, by a political duel, the life of one who, as a country gentleman, was certainly an ornament to the district in which he resided, and whose literary taste and talent entitle him to no mean place among the Poets of Scotland. Sir Alexander had only returned from London on the 25th, the day before he

received the challenge. He had there been performing the melancholy duty of laying the head of his only brother James,* to whom he was much attached, in the grave. In his pocket-book, after the fatal affair at Auchtertool, were found the following lines on the death of his relative:—

“ ON THE DEATH OF JAMES BOSWELL.

There is a pang when kindred spirits part,
And cold philosophy we must disown ;
There is a thrilling spot in ev'ry heart,
For pulses beat not from a heart of stone.

Boswell ! th' allotted earth has closed on thee ;
Thy mild but gen'rous warmth is pass'd away ;
A purer spirit never death set free,
And now the friend we honour'd is but clay.

His was the triumph of the heart and mind :
His was the lot which few are bless'd to know :
More proved, more valued—fervent, yet so kind ;
He never lost one friend, nor found one foe.”

The death of Sir Alexander Boswell created a great sensation throughout the country, more especially in Ayrshire, where he was much respected. His body having been brought from Balmuto to be deposited in the family vault at Auchinleck, the day of interment was one not soon to be forgotten in the neighbourhood of his estate. The whole of the Ayrshire Cavalry, with whom he had been long and honourably connected, turned out to pay the last homage to one who had so often delighted to appear at their head ; while an immense body of the tenantry, and all the gentlemen and respectable people of the district, swelled the numerous cavalcade of mourners.

The character of Sir Alexander Boswell was that of a high-spirited, chivalrous-minded gentleman—perhaps better adapted for a former than the present age. In the days of chivalry, he would

* Mr James Boswell, who died on the 24th February 1822, in the forty-third year of his age, was a man of very superior learning and talent. He was left the literary executor of Mr Malone—a trust which he executed in a manner that gave to the world one of the largest and most elaborate editions of Shakspeare ever published.

have been a knight of great spirit and prowess. His feelings were certainly too warm for the plodding realities of everyday life. Whatever engagement he might enter upon, he threw his whole soul into the undertaking; and they must have been no common obstacles indeed that he could not overcome. His political career was in consequence marked by an intensity and zeal which permitted of no compromise. In private life, and in the circle of his friends, he was one of the most social and amusing companions. He was much attached to masonry; and in the lodge none could preside over the "sons of light" with greater propriety, or more in the spirit of the "privileged few." The blank occasioned by his death has not yet, though nearly eighteen years have elapsed, been supplied in the county. Whether attending a county meeting of supply, or mixing in "a bonspiel" on the loch; or whether joining in the banquet at a Caledonian club ball, or in that of a yeomanry dance, Sir Alexander could equally contribute to the festivities and mirth of the occasion. He was therefore universally beloved, save perhaps where the line of politics was made the line of demarcation. In Parliament, he never made any figure as a speaker, though, judging from his fluency of language and readiness of reply at such public meetings as he chose to enter into discussion, this did not appear to arise from any want of talent for debate. In the earlier part of his life, he was fond of the turf and the field, and at one period kept a pack of hounds at Auchinleck.

The greater part of Sir Alexander's poetical effusions, we believe, have been printed in some shape or other; but as few copies were in general thrown off—having been intended for private circulation only—it is to be supposed that, besides those enumerated in the course of this sketch, many still remain which we have not seen. That the whole will be collected and published at some future period, we have no doubt; and if the imperfect notice thus taken of the Poet and his works shall tend in any way to the furtherance of an object so desirable, we shall feel amply rewarded for our trouble.

After his death, a good many pieces found their way to publicity through the medium of the newspapers. Among others, the

following, since adopted into several collections, first appeared in the *Ayr Courier* for January 1823. It affords a graphic picture of the animated game of curling, nowhere followed with more spirit or success than in Ayrshire, and in which the author was a keen participator:—

“ LOCHSIDE AND DAMBACK ; OR, THE CURLERS.*

A DUET.

TUNE—*The Auld Wife ayont the Fire.*

LOCHSIDE.

Let feckless chieils, like crucket weans,
Gae blaw their thumbs wi' pechs and granes,
Or thaw their fushionless shank banes,

An' hurkle at an ingle ;

But lads o' smeddum, croose and bauld,
Whase blood can thole a nip o' cauld,
Your *ice-stanes* in your gray-plaids fauld,

An' try on lochs a *pingle*.

Chorus.

When snaw lies white on ilka knowe,
The ice-stane and the good broom kow
Can warm us like a bleezin' low—

Fair fa' the ice and curlin'.

Soop the rink, lads, wide enough,
The *hog-scores* mak', and mak' ilk *brough*,
And though the game be close and tough,

We, aiblins, yet may bang them.

Stand on TAM SCOT—ye've a good e'e—

Come *creepin'* up the ice to me—

Lie here—my *besom's* on the *Tee*—

Let's ha'e a stane amang them.

When snaw lies white, &c.

DAMBACK.

JOHNNY GRAY mak' this your rest,

A good calm *shot* is aye the best,

He's *fled* it *ragin'* like a pest—

O, what's come owre you, Johnny ?

* A very fine print of “The Curlers” has lately been published from a painting by the talented Mr George Harvey, R.S.A., engraved by Mr William Howison, which does great credit to both artists.

LOCHSIDE.

Stand on, PEAT-BOG, and gie's a *guard*,
 I ken ye can play : cowtious, Laird,
 Just lie ahint our stane a yard—

I like thee weel—that's *bonnie*.

When snaw lies white, &c.

DAMBACK.

Now, ROB ROY, mind the ice is *gley* ;
 Aim for the guard, and *break an egg*,
 But, O be cowtious, man, I beg—

He's *roarin'* in the *corner*.

Soop—*gie him heels!* he's *aff the ice*—
 The chieils are fou, or else no wise ;
 For Gude-sake, will ye tak' advice,

And play in your auld or'ner.

When snaw lies white, &c.

LOCHSIDE.

Now GEORDIE GOUDIE here's a *port*,
 Be cannie, and we'll soop ye for't ;
 I carena though ye're twa ells short—

Hands up—there's walth o' *pouter*.

DAMBACK.

Now, WILLIE, here's a fine *iring*,
 Play straught, and *rub him* like a king—
 He's slipt his foot, and wi' a fling,

The stane's out owre his shouter.

When snaw lies white, &c.

Sin' I was born, and now I'm gray,
 I ne'er saw siccan wratched play ;
 Our fallows a' clean wud the day ;

Their stanes, like gowks, are hurlin' :

But bring the whisky and the baiks,
 Though fortune has play'd us the glaiks,
 A bumper to the Land o' Cakes,

An' l'er ain game o' curlin'.

When snaw lies white," &c.

The poems of Sir Alexander are mostly in manuscript, although several have appeared anonymously in the pages of the leading Tory journals. One or two of these can still be traced ; amongst which we may notice the exquisite parodies on popular melodies, subsequently reprinted in the "New Whig Guide." A few scraps from his pen having come into the possession of a literary

gentleman, who afterwards held an official situation in the west country, he printed some dozen copies. From these we quote the following verses on the death of the last Duke of Queensberry, whose peculiarities were for many years a fund upon which the gossips of London could almost daily draw :—

“ VERSES ON A REPORT OF THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY'S
DEATH.

Pray, what is all this vast ado
That runs each street and ally through ?
'Tis the departure of the Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

The king, GOD bless him ! gave a whew ;
What ! two Dukes dead—a third gone too ;
What, what ! could nothing save old Q ?
The star of Piccadilly.

Thank heav'n, he's gone ! exclaim'd Miss Prue,
My mother, and grandmother too,
May now walk safe from that old Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

Poll, Peggy, Patty, Kate, and Sue,
Descendants of old Dames he knew,
Weep for their suitor, rev'rend Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

The jockey club, Newmarket hue,
Who knew a little thing or two,
Cry out, ' He's off ; we've done old Q,
The star of Piccadilly !'

The seignors and seignoras too,
Like cats in love, set up their mew ;
Ah, morto, morto, povera Q !
The star of Piccadilly.

Townsend, Macmanus, all the hue
And cry of Bow Street, each purlicu
And dirty ally mourn old Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

Old Nick, he whisk'd his tail so blue ;
He cock'd his eye, and look'd askew ;
Ha, ha ! quoth he, I've caught old Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

On wings of sulphur off he flew ;
All London take your last adieu ;
There, there, he claws away old Q,
The star of Piccadilly.

And, now, may this be said of Q,
That right or wrong he'd still pursue
Whatever object pleased his view,
The star of Piccadilly.

He neither cared for me nor you,
But ran each vice and folly through ;
For ever seeking something new,
The star of Piccadilly.

Till (to agreement strictly true)
At length he gave the devil his due,
And died a boy—at eighty-two,
The star of Piccadilly."

Sir Alexander Boswell married, 26th November 1799, Miss G. Cumming, daughter of Thomas Cumming, Esq., banker, Edinburgh, by whom he left James, the present Baronet, born December 1806, who married, 1830, Jesse-Jane, daughter of Sir James Montgomery Cunninghame, Bart. of Corse Hill, and a daughter, married to Sir William Francis Elliot, Bart. of Stobs and Wells.

ARCHIBALD CRAWFURD,

AUTHOR OF THE "TALES OF MY GRANDMOTHER," &c.

ARCHIBALD CRAWFURD is a native of Ayr, where he still resides. No author, perhaps, was ever less indebted to the advantages of education—the mere rudiments of English reading being the utmost of his scholastic acquirements. When only thirteen years of age, he was sent to London to learn the trade of a baker with the husband of his sister, who had settled there some years before, and was then in good business. Archibald, however, did not relish the drudgery of a bakery; and having a natural taste for books, every hour which he could steal from his labours was sedulously devoted to the perusal of such volumes as chance threw in his way. In this manner he made considerable progress in improvement, though, as may well be supposed, his reading was of a very desultory description. Archibald's love of books brought him into much trouble, involving their luckless votary in frequent derelictions of duty. After eight years of unpleasant servitude, he returned to his native town; and, in order to acquire some knowledge of penmanship, he then, at the age of twenty-two, attended the classes of the writing-master in the Academy for a quarter of a year—his means not permitting a more prolonged attempt to remedy the defects of his early education.

Heartily disgusted with his former business, Archibald now turned his thoughts to another mode of life. Proceeding to Edinburgh, he was fortunate in getting into the employment of a very worthy gentleman, Charles Hay, Esq., with whom he remained for a good many years, the happiest of his existence. Perceiving his literary turn of mind, Mr Hay kindly indulged him with free access to his extensive library; and, with this rich fountain of knowledge open to him, he soon became acquainted with the best English writers, and drank deeply of history and

the drama. The old authors were more especially his favourites, preferring the quaint, forcible diction of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to the polish and wire-drawn sentimentality of modern literature.

Leaving Edinburgh, Crawford next engaged in the family of the late member of Parliament for Perth, Leith Hay, Esq., in whose service he continued upwards of five years. At the end of that period, about 1811, he once more returned to Ayr, and, with the money he had saved from his earnings, entered into business as a grocer. Fortune was not propitious, however; and, after struggling for a year or two, he was necessitated to relieve himself of the burden by compounding with his creditors. He then became auctioneer, took a small shop for the sale of furniture, got married, and now, with his children grown up around him, may be considered "well to do in the world."

Possessed of a rich fancy, and a teeming imagination, no one can tell a better anecdote, or embellish an off-hand tale with half the dramatic effect and humour of the witty auctioneer; but, though well known and appreciated for his talent in this way, it was not till a comparatively late period of his life that he aspired to the name of author. Prompted by the political ferment of 1819, he produced a satirical pamphlet, published anonymously, entitled "St James' in an Uproar," of which not less than three thousand copies were sold in Ayr and the neighbourhood. This production having attracted the notice of the authorities, the printer was apprehended, and compelled to give bail for his appearance; but happily no prosecution followed.

On terms of the closest friendship with Goldie, of the *Ayr and Wigtonshire Courier*, already noticed in our work, Crawford was encouraged in his contributions to that journal; and thus originated the "Tales of my Grandmother," the greater part of which first appeared in the columns of the *Courier*. At this period, Mr Crawford occupied a small furniture-shop in the High Street of Ayr, with a single apartment in the back premises for the accommodation of his family. In this room, amid the din of the children, or at midnight, when sleep commanded silence, those tales were written, and those verses composed, which promise to

hand his name down to posterity as a romancer or lyric poet of no inconsiderable merit.

Influenced by the suggestions of his friends, Mr Crawford announced his intention of publishing the "Tales of my Grandmother," from the press of the *Ayr and Wigtonshire Courier*. This volume was finished in 1824. Before issuing it to his subscribers he inclosed a copy to Blackwood, requesting his name on the title-page; but the publisher declined, no doubt from reasons satisfactory to himself. Not disheartened by this rebuff, the author immediately applied to Constable & Co., who replied that if he would cancel the Ayr edition, for which they agreed to remunerate him, and furnish a few more tales, so as to swell the volume into two, they would publish the work in Edinburgh, and, as they did in most other cases, allow him the half of the profits. To these terms Mr Crawford at once agreed. He instantly set to work, produced a quantity of fresh material, and, in 1825, the "Tales of my Grandmother" appeared from the Edinburgh press, in two volumes 12mo. The work was well received by the public, and flatteringly noticed in most of the literary journals and reviews of the day. While the sheets were in the press, the author paid a visit to Edinburgh, where he was received by Constable with all the affability and kindness for which the great biblioplist was distinguished. He dined with him at his own house, along with several of the literati, who fluttered round their liberal patron while his fortunes were in the ascendant. The evening was a happy one. Constable, not long in discovering the epigrammatic wit of the author, did not fail to draw it forth, much to his own amusement and that of the party. Crawford's sojourn in the capital was necessarily limited; and, on taking farewell next day, he experienced the same cordiality of feeling with which he had been received. Beyond kind words, however, our author derived no benefit whatever by the publication of his Tales. Constable & Co. allowed him to draw on them for £30, to settle with the Ayr publisher,* and would no doubt have acted honourably by

* The printing of the Ayr edition amounted to £54. Crawford thus lost £24 by the speculation.

him in accounting for the profits of the new; but the crisis of 1826 was at hand, the firm became bankrupt, and the claim of poor Crawford never was adjusted. Copies of the volumes found their way extensively into the circulating libraries, and their contents are well known. The Tales are chiefly founded on traditions familiar in the west of Scotland, told in a brief sketchy style, and with considerable dramatic effect. Scattered throughout the volumes are some very pretty verses. In "Johnny Faa," founded on the popular Carrick legend of Lord Cassillis' Lady and the Gipsies,* Sir John Dunbar, the early admirer of the lady, is represented as approaching the Castle in the character of an old minstrel, singing the following plaintive strain, accompanied by a French cithern or guitar:—

" O gie me back my heart again,
For its owre true for thy fause breast!
Thou silly thing! stay nearer hame,
Gin thou wad prize thy yerthly rest.

But she is fair although she's fause!
A waist sac genty nane may see!
The lre upon her taperin' hawse
Wad match the snaw on Benachie!

O! wha could smile, yet leuk sac proud?
—Fule that I was my heart to tinc!
Oft vaunts she o' her gentle bluid—
I daurna mint to speak o' mine!

What then? Grace sits upon her brow!
Her checks, nae rose was e'er so bright!
Her lips, twa cherries ripe to pu'!
Her e'en, twa beams o' heav'nly licht!

Thy lot is dool, thou flutterin' thing;
An' thou hast changed thy inirth for sorrow!
Ah! sac the joys that charm to-day,
Aft fill the cup o' wo to-morrow."

In "The Rash Vow," an inimitable sketch of its kind, Meg Witherspoon, a crazy bedlamite—somewhat akin to Madge Wild-

* " The gipsies cam' to our Lord's yett,
And, O! but they sang bonnie;
They sang sac sweet an' sac complete,
That down cam' our fair ladye."—*Old Ballad.*

fire in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian"—who enacts a conspicuous part in the drama, by preserving Johnny Dow from breaking his oath at the very moment he is about to wed another, sings the following touching lines over the grave of her child :—

“ The marygold’s a gaudy flower,
 An’ that may please the crowd ;
 The pale, the modest snaw-drap
 Is like my Maggy’s shrowd.
 The primrose an’ the daisy
 Are bonnie flowers an’ braw,
 An’ sweet’s yon yellow-scented flower
 That decks the ruin’d wa’ ;
 But sleep, but sleep, my bonnie bairn,
 Thou’rt sweeter than them a’.

The gowd’spink bigs her cozie nest
 High on yon stately tree ;
 The lav’rock sings a sweeter sang,
 An’ he bigs on the lea :
 Then sleep, my bonnie Maggy—
 Sleep, sleep, my bonnie bairn ;
 Upon thy breast he has biggit his nest,
 To keep his bosom warm.”

The song of "Bonnie Mary Hay," set to music by R. A. Smith, and which has become so popular, appeared originally in a detached form in the *Ayr and Wigtonshire Courier*, and was afterwards introduced in the tale of "The Huntly Casket." The song is undoubtedly much indebted to the air to which it is conjoined ; but it is at the same time a sweet little lyric, and well merits the favour in which it is held :—

“ Bonnie Mary Hay, I will lo’e thee yet,
 For thy eye is the slae, thy hair is the jet ;
 The snaw is thy skin, and the rose is thy cheek ;
 Bonnie Mary Hay, I will lo’e thee yet.

Bonnie Mary Hay, will you gang wi’ me,
 When the sun’s in the west, to the hawthorn-tree ;
 To the hawthorn-tree, in the bonnie berry-den,
 And I’ll tell you, Mary, how I lo’e you then ?

Bonnie Mary Hay, it’s haliday to me,
 When thou art coothic, kind, and free ;
 There’s nac clouds in the lift, nor storms in the sky,
 Bonnie Mary Hay, when thou art nigh.

Bonnie Mary Hay, thou maun na say me nay,
 But come to the bow'r by the hawthorn brac ;
 But come to the bow'r, and I'll tell you a' what's true,
 I ne'er can lo'e ony ither but you."

The heroine of this song was a daughter of Leith Hay, Esq., in whose service, as already mentioned, Crawford remained upwards of five years. The verses were composed as a grateful acknowledgment of the kindness experienced at the hand of the young lady, while the author was suffering under typhus fever.

Not long after the publication of his *Tales*, Mr Crawford, in conjunction with one or two literary friends, commenced a small weekly periodical in Ayr, under the title of "The Correspondent," published at *three-halfpence*, the first of the modern cheap publications with which the country is now inundated. It met with great encouragement, and might have lived much longer but for some misunderstanding which occurred amongst the parties concerned. Mr Crawford subsequently published a periodical on his own account, entitled "The Gaberlunzie," which continued for a few months. This little production, though crude and ill printed, contained several interesting tales, and not a few stanzas of a superior order. Amongst these, the song, "Scotland, I have no home but thee!" afterwards set to music, is deservedly admired, and likely to retain its popularity for a length of time:—

" Scotland, thy mountains, thy valleys, and fountains,
 Are famous in story—the birthplace of song ;
 Thy daughters the fairest, the sweetest, the rarest,
 Well may thy pilgrims long for their home.
 Trace the whole world o'er, find me a fairer shore,
 The grave of my fathers, the land of the free ;
 Joy to the rising race, Heav'n send them ev'ry grace,
 Scotland, dear Scotland, I have no home but thee !

Glow on, ye southern skies, where fruits wear richer dyes
 To pamper the bigot, assassin, and slave ;
 Scotland, to thee I'll twine, with all thy varied clime,
 For the fruits that thou bearest are true hearts and brave.
 Trace the whole world o'er, find me a fairer shore,
 The grave of my fathers, the land of the free ;
 Joy to the rising race, Heav'n send them ev'ry grace,
 Scotland, dear Scotland, I have no home but thee !"

When leisure permits, Mr Crawford still indulges his fancy in tale-writing, not forgetting to pay occasional court to the Muse ; and the probability is, that a fresh series of traditional sketches will appear from his pen at no distant period. Amongst the more recent of his poetical emanations, we may quote the following reiteration on the well-known local adage—

“ Kyle for a man,
 Carrick for a cow,
 Cunningham for butter and cheese,
 And Galloway for woo’ :”—

“ When auld Robin Bruce
 Lived at Turnberry House,
 He was the prince o’ his people, the frien’ o’ the land ;
 Then to Kyle for your cow,
 Gallowa’ for your woo,
 But Carrick, my billies, when ye want a man.

At the stream o’ auld Bannoeks,
 There was crackin’ o’ crummocks—
 It was a hard toolzie, lang focht hand to hand ;
 Then to Kyle for your cow,
 Gallowa’ for your woo,
 But Carrick, my billies, that day proved the man.

Then why should we not be crouse
 When we think o’ auld Robin Bruce,
 Whose blood doth still flow, and whose progeny rings ?
 Then to Kyle for your cow,
 Gallowa’ for your woo’,
 But Carrick, my billies, gives Britain her Queen.”

ROBERT HETRICK,

THE DALMELLINGTON POET.

ROBERT HETRICK was born in Dalmellington, where he still resides. His father, whom the Poet succeeded, was the village smith. With no education other than the common acquirements of reading and writing, Hetrick became an early votary of the Muse, and was remarkable, from his boyhood, for a thoughtful, staid deportment. The small library of his father, comprising such works as the Spectator, Robertson's History of Scotland, Life of Sir William Wallace, &c., was a source of great entertainment and instruction to the youthful Vulcan. Some of his songs, written during the French war, found their way to considerable popularity through the columns of the newspaper press. Encouraged by the favour with which these anonymous effusions were received, and urged by a numerous circle of friends, to whom his unassuming merit and personal worth recommended him, he was induced to publish a volume of "Poems and Songs" in 1826. The "Craigs of Ness," with which the collection opens, is a graphic and truly poetic description of the Glen of Ness, through which the Doon pours its rolling floods after escaping from the loch; but the poem is rather lengthy for quotation. One of the minor pieces, "The Invasion," written when the much-talked-of "flat-bottomed boat" expedition of Napoleon called the British population almost to a man to arms, may perhaps serve as a specimen of the volume:—

" While Monsieur is vowing our nation he'll ruin,
 Deprive us o' freedom, our monarch an' a',
 His restless Convention declare their intention
 Nae mair to let Britons o' liberty blaw :
 Their flat-bottom'd vermin, along the coast swarming,
 Are ready to bring the invaders awa' ;
 But our brave British freemen, both landsmen and seamen,
 Will fall at their posts e'er they flinch them ava.

Our dear happy island, where commerce is smiling,
 Where freedom says this is my country by law ;
 Our laws are as mild as the heart of a child,
 And the sway of our monarch is milder than a' :
 Our free constitution, since Will's revolution,
 Deserves our support, our attachment, and a' ;
 Whoe'er wont protect it, should not be respected,
 But hiss'd like a thief from our country awa'.

But Monsieur take care, of old England beware,
 For her children are ready to rise at a ca' ;
 Your fop-doodle breeding and mountebank cleeding,
 John Bull he abhors, your flagaries and a' :
 Yet if, through persuasion, you try the invasion,
 To please your great Consul, Convention, and a',
 Redd up your affairs for your wiyes and your heirs,
 For if ance you come owre you will near get awa'.

And if to the north you would then sally forth,
 There the chiefs their brave clans to battle will draw ;
 For Scotchmen are ready to fight like their daddies,
 Repelling with fury Danes, Romans, and a' ;
 They'll follow their leaders against the invaders,
 Nae dangers in war will make them turn awa' ;
 Ye proud Gallic legions, who visit these regions,
 Remember Sir Ralph and the auld Forty-twa.

But you, neighbour Pat, sir, what would ye be at, sir ?
 Nae mortal on earth understands you ava ;
 Though one party's loyal, the other stands trial,
 And hang'd are for traitors to country and law.
 But Paddy be wise, man, take Sawney's advice, man,
 Stand firm as a rock to your twin brothers twa ;
 Despise the intrusions of Gallic delusions,
 Be true to your Monarch and Erin-go-bragh.

Ye sons of sweet Coila, your hearts they will boil a',
 To think of your freedom by France ta'en awa',
 Still may you inherit brave Wallace's spirit,
 To fight for your country, and conquer or fa'.
 If friendship pervade us, though Frenchmen invade us,
 We will make them repent that they tried it ava ;
 With Macadam and Oswald, Fullarton and Boswell,
 We'll pound them to dust, their Convention, and a'." *

* The above-named gentlemen were commanders of volunteer corps in the vicinity of the author's residence.

Though well-advanced in years, the village laureate is yet frequently called on to supply the annual ode at a "Wallace Club" or "Burns' Anniversary" meeting; and his Pegasus is seldom shy or restive on such occasions. From one or two of his off-hand effusions of this kind now before us, we select the following, sung at a Wallace Club meeting in Ochiltree:—

"How blest is our country where freedom is growing,
 Like the pine of the forest, perpetually green;
 Where the breasts of the brave Caledonians are glowing
 With all that ennobles the children of men.
 They are born to be free as the wind on the mountains,
 That raves in the tempest and smiles in the gale;
 And their hearts are as pure as the clear rolling fountains,
 That stream from the rocks to meander the dale.

As for base-hearted tyrants, they hate and detest them,
 Even though in the field they were gallant and brave;
 For their power and dominion, who dares to resist them
 Are doom'd to the gibbet, the rack, and the grave.
 But Wallace and Bruce, from the battle so gory—
 In the cause of their country never would flee—
 They fought for their freedom, their country, and glory,
 To fall in the carnage or stand to be free.

And the brave Caledonians, the worthy descendants
 Of heroes and chieftains that flourish'd of yore,
 Will never relinquish the brave independence
 That Wallace had strove to inherit before.
 Though tyrants may league for to rob them of freedom,
 The national right that's so dear to them a',
 They still will have heroes and patriots to lead them,
 Like Bruce for to conquer, or Wallace to fa'.

Though our land is begirt by the cold stormy ocean,
 Our dark misty mountains are rugged and bare,
 Yet these dark misty mountains excite our devotion,
 The goddess of freedom is worshipped there.
 And long may she reign in our mountains and valleys;
 And long may our worship be warm and sincere:
 Then freedom and right, from the boor to the palace,
 Will grow and will flourish perpetually there."

JOHN WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "THE RETROSPECT," &c.

THE humble individual, a short sketch of whose life and writings we are about to give, was born in the year 1805, at a place called Auchincloigh, in the neighbourhood of Galston. His parents, being in indigent circumstances, were unable to give him more than the mere rudiments of education. The Poet, we believe, was only a few months at school; and when he left it could read very indifferently. Like the Ettrick Shepherd, Wright was principally indebted to his own perseverance and unaided efforts for all the education he ever received. In his youth, he was a stirring and "wayward boy," fonder of wandering unconstrained along the picturesque banks of the Cessnock or the Burnawn—both of which streams are frequently alluded to in his poems—than of following after any settled occupation. He was first employed as a coal-driver,* and afterwards apprenticed to a weaver, named George Brown, in the village of Galston, to which place his parents had removed when the Poet was about three years of age. His master, a pious and benevolent man, was much interested in his welfare, and generously encouraged that desire for mental improvement which began to manifest itself in the mind of young Wright. It was at this period that he commenced to court the Muse; and the dawnings of that poetical genius, which afterwards shone out so powerfully, first assumed tangibility in the shape of an interlude. As this effusion was never committed to writing—a very difficult task with the author for some time—we are unable to speak with accuracy of its merits. His next attempt was a drama; and he chose as a subject the life of the great impostor Mahomet. As might be expected, he

* Wright never, as is stated in the *Quarterly Review*, in an article on "Southey's Lives of the Uneducated Poets," wrought in a cotton-mill.

found the task too vast and comprehensive to be embodied within the prescribed limits of a drama; and he therefore relinquished it before it was half finished.

When he commenced "The Retrospect," he never for a moment contemplated the idea of swelling it out to the size which it latterly assumed; but, animated by the praise bestowed upon a few stanzas which he had shown to some of his intimate acquaintances, he was induced to continue. In his preface, he states, "that before thinking of a hero, the whole of the first and a considerable part of the second canto was composed." The truth of this no one will doubt who carefully peruses this able poem. "The Retrospect" is consequently nothing more nor less than a glowing detail of the youthful thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the author. The hero, if indeed he is deserving of such an appellation, does not make his appearance till near the end, and, even then, plays a very unimportant and subordinate part. In a word, his *exit* is as sudden as his first appearance is unexpected. The real hero is the author himself; and he need not be ashamed to avow it, as he has contrived to frame a genuine model both for imitation and instruction.

The poem having accumulated so rapidly in his hands, he began at length to entertain serious thoughts of having it published; and in a short time, by dint of the exertions of himself and his friends, a respectable number of subscribers were obtained—more than sufficient, we believe, to cover the expenses of printing, &c. Wright, however, before he launched forth as an author, determined to have the patronage of some man of genius. Intent on this object, he set out for Edinburgh, without money, and without any recommendation save the manuscript of his poems. It is said, though we cannot vouch for the truth of the statement, that, before reaching the capital, he was more than once under the necessity of satisfying his hunger in the turnip-fields on the roadside as he passed along. Arrived in Edinburgh, on his very doubtful embassy, he was at a loss what to do—how to procure lodging, or even the wherewithal to sustain existence. In this unpleasant dilemma, he recollected that he had an acquaintance attending the classes at the University. He immediately set out

in quest of him, and fortunately was not long in discovering where he resided. This lucky circumstance at once restored the drooping spirits of our hero; and in the course of a few days, through the good offices of his friend, Wright found his way into the presence of Professor Wilson—a gentleman well known as the liberal patron of genius. The Professor, no doubt struck with the unassuming demeanour of the Poet, received him in the most cordial manner.

The result of this interview was highly satisfactory to the feelings of Wright. His productions not only elicited the warm commendations of the learned critic, but also a promise that he would exert himself in his future welfare. Wright may be said at this time to have reached the acme of his ambition, and returned to his native village flushed with the hopes of future success. We believe we are not wrong when we state, that it was immediately after his arrival in Galston that the poem entitled “The Street-Remarkers” was written, containing some biting satire on the envious and uncourteous manner in which he was welcomed by some of his pretended friends.

In the course of a short period, the first edition of his poems was published, (dedicated, as a matter of courtesy, to Professor Wilson,) from which the Poet realized a very considerable sum. A second edition was almost immediately afterwards undertaken, including several new pieces; and this impression, we believe, he also succeeded in disposing of. But the strength of mind which had borne him up throughout the adversity of his early years, seems to have been incapable of resisting the tide of fame and good fortune which so suddenly set in upon him. Literally carried away by its power, and unable to guide the helm of his little bark, in place of profiting by the smiles of the world, he very soon became one of its shipwrecked castaways.

It is of little importance to follow the Poet through the subsequent scenes of his life. He got married, and settled in Pollockshaws, where he again was compelled to have recourse to the loom for a livelihood. Seized with a transient fit of industry, and still regarding the Muse as a rich mine upon which he could draw at will, poor Wright appears to have made one desperate

effort to regain the position he had lost. Working night and day at the loom, he was not less intent on weaving his thoughts together on a subject which he flattered himself would be the crowning effort of his genius. We forget the topic; but it was one for which a public prize had been offered. Our informant paid a visit to Wright at this period, and he describes his appearance to have been eccentric in the extreme. The writing materials lay convenient to his loom, and the moment a couplet struck him, they were of course recorded; and ever and-anon he quaffed from a flowing can—not “o’ reaming nappy,” or the produce of the grape—like a Burns or a Byron, but of the best Epsom Salts, diluted with a due quantum of water! John informed his astonished visiter that he found the application of the salts a most effective stimulant to his genius, though it had wellnigh reduced his system to a skeleton. This fit of industry and physic did not long continue. His erratic temperament soon spurned the hymeneal chain; he left his home, and may be said to have become a houseless wanderer. When rallied on the subject, he excuses himself by saying that he has merely made “*a BYRONIAN separation.*”

Gifted with talents of no ordinary description—possessed of a mind that could appreciate whatever was sublime or beautiful in nature—Wright might one day or other have raised himself to considerable eminence among our national poets, and have been an ornament and an honour to his native land. But, alas! a change has come over the spirit of his dream, and he has ignobly fallen from the pinnacle on which genius and fortune both combined to place him.

“The Retrospect,” his best production, is stocked with many choice gems, which cannot fail to convey a very favourable impression of the author’s capabilities. The following stanzas are of a very high order:—

“ Thus will I tune my unambitious song,
To childhood cherish’d in the rural shade;
Nor form again a wish, nor ever long
The dizzying height to reach, nor fawn for aid.

The flowers that I will gather soon may fade ;
 The gems that glitter in their native dell
 May lose their lustre to the world display'd ;
 Yet will not I 'gainst frowning fate rebel ;
 Sharp, festering, sad regrets shall ne'er be mine to quell.

* * *

In youth's bright summer, when I skimm'd along
 On rapture's rolling tide, 'twas sweet to try,
 In buoyancy of soul, to weave sweet song
 While searching nature with unsullied eye ;
 The aggregated charms of earth and sky—
 The blight of winter and the bloom of spring—
 The green and golden mantle, and soft sigh
 Of gentle autumn—all alike did bring
 Fresh beauty to the mind, on adoration's wing.

* * *

For then I was all poesy, and would breathe
 Song of my own awaking, and still loved
 In vapours, clouds, and storms myself to sheath ;
 And but from these the sweets of being proved,
 Partook their spirit, and perchance promoted
 My own, it may be, higher than its height,
 Or for my darkening destiny behoved—
 Yet wheresoe'er a star of earth shone bright,
 Or heaven, there was my home, my heart, and my delight.

* * *

Wild, witching scene, yet shall it be that I
 From thee shall part ?—Thy waters still roll on,
 Leap, burn, and blaze with poetry—thy sky
 Its drapery of clouds and stars enthrone
 In everlasting loveliness thereon,
 All-beautifying, beautified—the while,
 Above my bones sepulchral ashes strown
 Shall hide thee from me ?—Can it be, this hill,
 That wood, these dells shall glow, and I lie cold and still ? ”

The author's address to the Cessnock, a stream closely linked with his early associations, is no less touching than true to nature :—

“ Roll on, sweet streamlet ! in thy fairy dream ;
 Bright are thy banks with verdure, and thy bower
 With bloom and melody—the beauteous gleam
 Thou wearest, on thy wave and in thy flowers,

That led us to thee, in our buoyant hours
 Of blissful childhood, when the heart ran o'er,
 And lip and eye spoke love. Oh! ye bless'd powers
 That here preside, waft back to this loved shore,
 And these dear haunts, the form so fitted to adore."

The poem concludes with a high eulogium on the gentler sex; the outpouring of a heart deeply susceptible of those noble sympathies which shed a lustre over the "human form divine:"—

"Man, the proud scoffer, may contemn; though all
 His schemes of bliss twine round thee—spurn and threat;
 Yet ever and anon, when ills befall,
 He casts himself a suppliant at thy feet;
 Frozen apathy not long his wintry seat
 May fix where thou should'st sway—sole mortal boon
 That charm'st through life, and mak'st a death-bed sweet;
 Grief fades in thy bright beam, like mists from noon,
 Or crags that melt in light beneath the summer moon.

Heaven's fair semblance, woman! fount where lies
 True sympathy alone; sweet woman's ire
 Ends with her weeping, like a cloud that dies
 Away when emptied; but there is a fire
 No tears may stifle, rooted, dark, desire
 Of vengeance in proud man, inflamed by time,
 Which not till life-blood quench it can expire;—
 Like shower of summer dropp'd from heavenly clime,
 To soften, brighten earth, is woman!—man, all crime."

In summing up this brief and imperfect sketch, we cannot do better than quote the author's graphic description of himself, which is allowed by those who know him to be a very impartial outline of his peculiar characteristics:—

"AN ODD CHARACTER.

A wayward youth, of vague and varying moods,
 And strong, though check'd propensities, I sing:
 One who could woo the muse by streams and woods,
 Or make her drunken at unhallow'd spring—
 One who could carol on the thundery clouds
 The song of hope, or soar on doubt's dark wing;
 All men mistook him, reck'ning at first glance
 He was an easy and good-natured dunce!

Ay, they were much mistaken ; for he threw
 Simplicity around him as a veil,
 Whereby the working of men's minds he knew—
 Himself unknown ; they reck'd not to inhale
 So dull a spirit ; and there were but few
 Who otherwise beheld him : he seem'd stale
 And spiritless in gesture, speech, and feature—
 A heartless, harmless, good-for-nothing creature.

His spirit ceased at times—though to none known—
 To be itself ; for he had grown ideal
 In almost all things he did look upon,
 Touch, taste, or hear ; and objects most unreal
 Received from him more bulk of blood and bone
 Than would with witch-lore even at times agree well ;
 The brown leaf, rustling forth its evening sigh,
 Shook him all o'er, as if a god rush'd by !

* * *

Love he had felt—but let it pass away—
 Because on woman, though he doated much,
 He felt his spirit could not bear the sway
 Of making e'er such slender reed his crutch :
 Though he had heard of happiness this way,
 He dreaded deeply the connubial clutch :
 O'er him, withal, did Love much power retain,
 Back from the clanking of his iron chain.

* * *

Round his own lovely village centred all
 His loves, his hopes, and wishes, till he found
 His cup of bliss there fill'd with burning gall
 By Envy's squinting horde, that gather'd round,
 And o'er his path of fame did foully crawl,
 Like hissing adders, when his hopes were crown'd ;
 His muse they tried to blight—but she unmarr'd ;
 They fell to work upon himself, the Bard !

* * *

His was the hand of scorn—not power : mankind,
 In ordinary cases, found him civil ;
 But, once awaked, they shrank aghast to find
 A spirit rise that would browbeat the devil !
 His heart was warm, and vain, and oft would wind
 Around him flattery from a common drivel :
 His brow was wrinkled, and his young scalp hoary,
 Twice ten years ere his time, through love of glory.

* * *

Though forests, and deep glens, and mountain streams,
 And high o'er-hanging cliffs, and caverns drear,
 Form'd the first rainbow of his youthful dreams,
 That o'er him hung for ever, fresh and clear—
 Yet solitude, though wrapt in noonday beams,
 Without some cottage or companion near,
 He trembled to approach. Why is it so,
 That cherish'd feeling e'er should end in wo?

Thus was this youth the comet of his kind,
 A dancing streamer—wand'ring will-o'-the-wisp;
 The misty ties of men could never bind
 His free and daring spirit in their grasp;
 The common path he left, if he might find
 A by-way near, some random muse to clasp.
 Reader! this youth's no phantom of the brain:
 He is not dead, but sleeps—to rise again."

HUGH BROWN,

AUTHOR OF "THE COVENANTERS," &c.

AMONG the more recent, or rather the "living poets" of Ayrshire, the author of "The Covenanters" is entitled to a prominent position. Whether regarded as a man of genius, or a useful and unassuming member of society, he is equally recommended to our esteem. Nor are his claims on our attention at all abated by the fact, that he belongs to that class of persevering self-taught men of whom our country has so much occasion to be proud.

HUGH BROWN is a native of Newmilns, and was originally brought up to the trade of muslin weaving. He had the advantage of an education common to the working-classes of Scotland—reading, writing, and arithmetic; but the thirst for knowledge was deeply implanted in his bosom; and, though constantly engaged during the day at the irksome manual avocation to which

he was early apprenticed, he still found leisure to attend classes in the evening, and to improve his mind by general reading. The village library, to which he had access, was to him a storehouse of literature ; but, without any one to direct him in his choice of subjects, he is understood to complain of having formed that desultory habit of reading, by which the mind may acquire much but forgets more. His taste for poetry was of early growth ; and, long ere he had attained the “ bone and muscle ” of manhood, he was gratified by finding the “ Poet’s Corner ” of more than one journal thrown open to his effusions. Through the medium of the village library, Brown had been enabled to keep pace in some measure with the literature of the day, and he drank deeply at the fountains which the overflowing genius of a Scott and a Byron so amply supplied. Like many others of the period, he felt much interested in the history of the latter, more especially in reference to his short but enthusiastic career in the cause of Greece. On the death of the noble Poet, Brown gave vent to his feelings in the following stanzas, which he addressed to the editor of the Scots Magazine :—

“ MR EDITOR,—The inclosed lines were composed when the mania was raging for composition about the noble Poet to whose memory they are dedicated. They were thrown into a corner, (perhaps it would have been better they had never been drawn from it ;) and, casting my eyes t’other day upon them, the very noble thought struck me of sending them to the editor of the Edinburgh Magazine, that he might judge whether they are worthy of a place in that miscellany, or only fit to

‘ Rouse a dead man into rage,
And warm with red resentment the wan cheek.’

If, sir, it be any apology for these verses to say that I am illiterate, I acknowledge that I am so, though the piece itself would tell you this, as I have heard or seen somewhere, ‘ in language more expressive than words.’ If you think it worthy of a place, I shall be very happy should you insert it ; if not, there is, Mr Editor, a receptacle near you, to which it can be conveyed to the dead stream of Lethe. Throw it there in silence, for I think it is at least worthy to be forgotten. Yours, &c.

HUGH BROWN.

Newmilns, Nov. 1825.

The harp of the minstrel is hung in the hall,
And his fleeting existence is o’er ;
And still are its strings, as it sleeps on the wall,
Like the fingers that swept it before.

His eye, once so bright, has been robb'd of its fire ;
 His bosom, once wild as the wave,
 Which the shrill note of liberty's trump could inspire,
 Or the heart-thrilling tones of the well-swept lyre,
 Is silent and still as the grave.

' He had evil within him'—we see the dark shade
 When his bosom's dark secrets we scan ;
 Yet his arm was still lifted the freeman to aid,
 And his deeds shed a lustre on man.
 If the black cloud of hate o'er his bosom did low'r,
 If he wish'd to the desert to flee,
 He was only the foe of the minion of pow'r,
 Who, fiend-like, stalks over the earth for an hour,
 But was ever the friend of the free.

The soft scenes of nature for him had no charms,
 The riv'let and fast-fading flow'r
 Awaked not his soul, like the horrid alarms
 When a nation is wreck'd in an hour.
 In the dark-sweeping storm, by Omnipotence driven,
 In the flash and the long-pealing roll ;
 In the rocking of earth, in the frowning of heaven,
 When the pillars of nature seem trembling and riven,
 'Twas a beam of delight to his soul.

As he wander'd (O Greece!) o'er thy once hallow'd ground,
 And stood on the warrior's grave,
 He heard but the voice of Oppression around,
 And saw but the home of the slave—
 As he gazed through the vista of ages gone by,
 In the glory and pride of the world—
 As he gazed on the ruins that round him did lie,
 It drew from his bosom a sorrowful sigh,
 Where Tyranny's flag was unfurl'd.

He tuned his wild harp o'er the ruins of Greece,
 His strains were impassion'd and strong ;
 They solaced his heart, like a seraph of Peace,
 While her freedom arose like a song.
 And when the bright sun of their liberty rose,
 His heart full of rapture adored ;
 The morning had dawn'd on their fatal repose,
 Their slumbers were broken, they rush'd on their foes,
 To shiver the chains they abhorr'd.

Did he fall in the struggle when Greece would be free ?
 'Twas a star blotted out on their shore ;

But his hovering spirit yet triumphs with thee,
 Though his brave arm can aid thee no more.
 He expired as the torch of thy glory grew bright,
 In the glorious noon of his day ;
 His triumph was short, like the meteor of night,
 As it flashes o'er heav'n with its long train of light—
 For like it he vanish'd away.

You have seen the bright summer's sun sink in the west,
 And the glories that shrouded him there,
 Like the splendours that dwell on the heav'n of the blest,
 Immortal, unclouded, and fair.
 So the halo of glory shall circle his name,
 His wreath shall eternally bloom ;
 And Britain triumphant her Byron shall claim,
 As he shines with the great in the temple of Fame,
 The triumph of man o'er the tomb !”

The foregoing verses of our youthful Poet not only found a place, but were prefaced by the editor with the following very flattering remarks :—“ That the spirit of Burns still hovers among the peasantry of his native county of Ayr, we think will be manifest from the following letter and verses, which have lately been sent to us from an Ayrshire village, by one of the same class to which Burns belonged. Most willingly have we conceded to the request of the author, in giving a place to these stanzas, which, though liable to various objections when judged of by the fastidious rules of modern taste, yet, we cannot help thinking, display a very considerable extent of intellectual capacity, vigorous imagination, and correctness, if not delicacy of feeling. In short, had the lines of Hugh Brown's destiny been cast in more pleasant places, we doubt not that he would have made no contemptible figure in the eyes of his fellow-men.” Such a compliment from so high a source as the conductor of the Scots Magazine, was well calculated to stimulate ambition ; and the author had the still farther gratification of finding his “ Lines to the Memory of Byron ” copied into several newspapers of the day.

Brown now came to be regarded by his fellow-villagers as a young man of superior mind and promise ; and not long afterwards he was engaged to teach a small school at Drumclog—the scene of the victory of the Covenanters over Claverhouse. This

was an employment more suited to his disposition, and one which allowed him a much greater portion of time for self-improvement, and the cultivation of his poetical powers. The locality was one well suited to his enthusiasm. There our Scottish forefathers had encountered the almost invincible arms of the Romans; and there, in later times, had the same persevering spirit of liberty been evinced in stern and unbending resistance to civil tyranny. When wandering alone amid the battle-field, in the vicinity of Loudoun Hill, consecrated to the liberties of our country, he frequently gave vent to his feelings in poetical numbers, or treasured up those impressions of scene and sentiment, which nowhere so forcibly suggest themselves as on the spot sacred to the struggles or triumph of the free. It was while a teacher at Drumclog, and deeply imbued with the spirit and reminiscences of the days of the Covenanters, that Brown first thought of attempting a poem in honour of those who fought and fell to secure the blessings which we now enjoy. It was not, however, until a good many years afterwards, when he had changed the scene of his labours, that he set about undertaking the task then proposed.

Having finished his engagement at Drumclog, and a vacancy occurring in a private school at Galston, he was admitted as teacher, which situation he still holds, and is deservedly respected in his sphere. Here he found leisure to perfect himself in the different branches he was required to teach, and also to instruct himself in other collateral departments which he found either necessary or desirable to acquire. He prosecuted the study of Latin, almost by his own unaided exertions, till enabled to translate those authors usually employed in a course of instruction, which, together with considerable progress made in the French language, afford no mean evidence of his perseverance in overcoming the difficulties of an originally limited education. Nor did he cease, amid the plodding toils of scholarship and the arduous task of imparting instruction to others, to urge his suit with the Muse. The poem entitled "The Covenanters," which, with other pieces, was published at Glasgow by J. Symington & Co., in 1838, was for the most part composed after the fatiguing employment of the day, in the peaceful bosom of his family. He was engaged in it

altogether about a year; and, during that period, found much pleasure in resorting to the task, rendered pleasant after the turmoil and anxiety of the school. The little volume which he ventured to put forth, not without hesitation and fear, was well received; and several favourable notices of it appeared in the public journals, * and, amongst others, the following, which we think not less flattering than judicious:—

“ The theme chosen by this new aspirant for poetical fame, is one of abiding interest in the bosom of every native of the ‘land of the mountain and the flood.’ Those who best know the endurance and sufferings of our persecuted forefathers—those who best understand the blessings which their steadfastness and indomitable resolution secured to their descendants, are the most ardent in their admiration of their principles. With all this admiration for these sturdy assertors of their rights and faith, it is strange that no Scotsman has been found to embalm their deeds in poetry. Saving a few passages in Graham, Campbell, Montgomery, and Struthers, their memory is left by the poets to the quaint epitaphs on their tombstones, and the sober relations of history. Mr Brown, then, is happy in the choice of his subject. To the execution of his task he has brought considerable historical reading, a cultivated taste, an ardent imagination, and a style which is at once glowing and correct. He is an enthusiast in his subject—espousing the cause of his heroes with a Homeric ardour, and denouncing their oppressors in terms of unmitigated indignation. Hence many of the pictures that he draws are striking and full of feeling.

The lesser poems possess much merit. Some are pleasing and graceful, others vigorous and graphic; and the ode on ‘Desaix’ displays a lyric talent of a very high order. A pensive feeling generally pervades them; and the sentiments expressed are such as will find an echo in the breasts of the friends of religion and morality. We have only room for a single extract, which we take at random from ‘The Covenanters:’—

Where Loudoun Hill lifts high its conic form,
 And bares its rocky bosom to the storm,
 Time’s varying change has come o’er man, but Thou
 Stand’st with immortal nature on thy brow!
 As when the Roman soldier gazed on thee,
 Abrupt, and frowning in thy majesty.
 There Cæsar’s sentinel his vigil kept,
 And Rome’s proud legions in thy shadow slept;
 There the tired eagle, like a guiltless thing,
 Paused in its flight, and droop’d its wearied wing;
 Beneath thy brow their flag of death was furl’d,
 Whose life was war, whose empire was the world.
 Around thee are the hallow’d fields of fame,
 That shed a lustre on the Scottish name:—

* Tait’s Magazine for December gives a flattering review of Brown’s volume.

Around thee Wallace raised his battle cry—
 Thy rocky echoes thunder'd in reply!—
 Free as the eagle on his native hills,
 Indignant saw and felt his country's ills ;
 Rush'd with an angel's might with spear and shield,
 And reap'd the sword's red harvest of the field.
 Where the rude cairn, the time-worn altar, where
 The wand'rer knelt as Freedom's worshipper,—
 The cairn more sacred than the marble bust,
 Or pompous pile that hides the tyrant's dust ;
 There ruthless hearts and ruder hands have been,
 And pass'd the ploughshare o'er the hallow'd scene ;
 And left no relic, not a vestige near,
 To claim the sacred off'ring of a tear !

Around thee, Bruce, with flashing helm and plume,
 Who won his throne through battle's storm and gloom,
 Ranged his proud banner'd host upon the plain
 Against the might of England's steel-clad men.—
 The freeman's arm is strong, his heart is true—
 And this the chivalry of England knew ;
 The Bruce's sword, the soldier's trusty spear,
 Fell like the lightning in its full career.
 The patriot king with rapture-kindled eye
 Triumphant saw the reeling phalanx fly ;
 And vict'ry's beacon-light begin to burn,
 The glorious prelude to his Bannockburn."

We might quote many delightful passages from the poem of "The Covenanters." There is scarcely a page that does not teem with beautiful imagery, described in language forcible and appropriate. The following description of a field-meeting, presents a graphic picture of the times :—

"The heroes of the Covenant, array'd
 At once with Bible and with battle-blade,
 Heard no sweet Sabbath-bell announce the day :—
 Met on the wild, but not in peace, to pray ;
 Their temple was the deep and shaded dell,
 Where nature's hymns with artless rapture swell,
 Girded with stream and rock ; while hung on high
 The sun-illumined vault or starry sky.
 Here met the gray-hair'd man, the veteran sage,
 Bending and trembling on the staff of age ;
 Enduring manhood, leaning on his sword,
 A still, stern listener to the holy word ;
 The youth with dauntless heart and fiery eye,
 Ere he had learn'd to live, here learn'd to die ;

The mother with her child ; the blushing maid,
 Here raised the song, and here together pray'd :
 Above them on the rock, or mossy mound,
 Great Cargill stood, with years and sufferings crown'd ;
 He stood, his white locks streaming in the blast,
 Like some prophetic being of the past ;
 With inspiration's voice denouncing wo
 Against the arm that laid his country low ;
 Spread on the flower-clad table of the moss
 The holy sacred Symbols of the Cross !—
 All shed a heaven-like sanctity around,
 And stamp'd it holier yet than classic ground ;
 And with the promise calm'd the troubled breast,
 Pointing the spirit to the Land of Rest :—
 Kindling with heaven-born light and faith sublime,
 These exiles triumph'd o'er the ills of time.
 The sentinel, like danger's nursling child,
 Paced his lone mountain watch-tower on the wild ;
 Searching with soldier's eye the wastes afar,
 Timely to wake the alarum note of war :—
 When all into a fearless silence died !
 And swords flash'd out with high heroic pride,
 Hope in the heart, and lightning in the eye,
 Like men of many wrongs prepared to die.
 'Tis not the peaceful hour when spirits burn—
 From earth to heaven in glowing rapture turn
 With heavenly transport, and an earthless love,
 In high seraphic song to God above—
 'Tis danger's hour that gives this loftier tone ;
 Then thoughts that angels feel become our own ;—
 Glancing around on suffering and decay,
 The prison'd spirit pants to be away." *

The following hymn, embodied in the first canto of the poem,
 affords an excellent specimen of those musings in which the author
 indulged while resident at Drumclog :—

" I stood by the Martyr's lonely grave,
 Where the flowers of the moorland bloom ;
 Where bright memorials of nature wave

* It is due to the author to state, that this description of a field-meeting was written before he had an opportunity of seeing Harvey's celebrated " Picture of the Covenanters." The poet and the painter have hit on each other's ideas so closely, that the one might serve as a very accurate illustration of the other.

Sweet perfume o'er the sleeping brave,
 In his moss-clad mountain tomb !

I knelt by that wild and lonely spot,
 Where moulders the heart of one
 That bled and died, but that bleached not
 At the tyrant's chain, or the soldier's shot,
 Till life's last sands had run.

And the vision of other days came back,
 When the dark and bloody band,
 With the might of a living cataract,
 Essay'd to sweep in their fiery tract
 The godly from the land.

When Zion was far on the mountain height,
 When the wild was the house of prayer ;
 Where the eye of eternal hope grew bright,
 O'er the saint array'd in the warrior's might,
 For his God and his country there !

When the barbarous hordes as they onward rode,
 By the wild and rocky glen,
 Have heard, when away from man's abode,
 A voice that awed like the voice of God,—
 —'Twas the hymn of fearless men !

For the sunless cave was the Martyr's home,
 And the damp cold earth his bed ;
 And the thousand lights of the starry dome
 Were the suns of his path, while doom'd to roam
 O'er the wilds where his brothers bled !—

When the clang of the conflict rung on the heath,
 And the watchword of freedom rose
 Like the tones of heaven, on the saint's last breath,
 Far, far o'er the battle notes of death,
 As he soar'd to his last repose !—

When he stood by the scaffold, the fagot, and stake,
 As his earthly heritage ;
 Yet welcomed all for his Master's sake,
 Whose sword of vengeance should yet awake
 To curb their whirlwind rage.

The vision pass'd ; but the home is mine,
 Where the wild bird makes her nest,
 On the rocky altars and mossy shrine,
 Where the weeds and flowers of the desert twine
 Round the Martyr's bed of rest.

The lover of freedom can never forget
 The glorious peasant band—
 His sires—that on Scotia's moorlands met ;—
 Each name like a seal on the heart is set,
 The pride of his Fatherland !”

In the miscellaneous department of the volume there are several pieces of true poetic merit, and which ought to entitle the author to a much higher rank in the scale of literature. Among these we have no hesitation in pointing out

“ THE MISSIONARY.

Child of a thousand perils, thou,
 With love upon thy dauntless brow,
 And mercy in thine eye,
 Wouldst guide the rudest savage clan,
 Who claims the brotherhood of man,
 To peace and rest on high.

Lone, homeless pilgrim of the earth,
 Around thy father's joyous hearth
 Thy fond affection clings ;
 There thy young lips were taught to pray—
 There thy young thoughts were borne away
 To great and holier things.

Ah ! that bright home, once strew'd with flowers,
 Where love and pleasure lit the hours,
 To memory's light is given ;
 Thy brothers are the human race,
 Each desert spot thy resting-place,
 Thy home—thy home is heaven.

Thy mother wept to part, but there
 The eloquence of earnest prayer,
 Like balm from heaven, fell !
 Thy father, with a holy joy,
 Breathed his last blessing o'er his boy,
 With one heart-wrung farewell !

The angry whirlwinds that sweep,
 Unbridled o'er the Arctic deep,
 Shall rock him to repose ;
 Where man, like earth's lone sentinel,
 With ignorance and storms must dwell,
 Amid eternal snows.

Or, wand'ring o'er yon Southern isles,
 Where everlasting summer smiles ;
 But where the swarthy band
 Howl o'er the human sacrifice,
 That stains the earth, and veils the skies,
 And shadows all the land.

Or, where the Bramin feeds the fire
 That forms the widow's funeral pyre,
 And calls on Brama's name :
 Who curses Britain, and her God,
 Who piles the blazing fagot load,
 And fans the unholy flame.

* * *

And Afric's sons shall yet be free ;
 For the glad sounds of liberty
 Are borne across the wave ;
 Wherever man has found a home,
 There will the Missionary roam,
 And search, and teach, and save.

Though toil and danger cloud his path—
 Though famine stand in league with death,
 Like Paul, he journeys on,
 O'er desert, wave, and tainted clime,
 To woo a guilty world from crime,
 By love—and love alone.

* * *

Go ! for the good man's pray'rs shall rise ;
 Go ! for the angel of the skies
 Smiles o'er each wild abode ;
 Go ! for the Saviour's word is given,
 That earth shall echo back to heaven,
 Hosannah to our God !”

The verses to “*DESAIX*” are unaccountably captivating. The spirit of wild enthusiasm which they breathe, is admirably in keeping with the subject :—

“*DESAIX*.”

‘ Whatever of the brave *Desaix* earth yet holds, reposes on the lone summit of the Alps.’—*Dr Memes' Translation of Bourrienne.*

Still thou sleep'st, sublime and lonely,
 Within thine Alpine grave ;
 A sepulchre for warriors only,
 A death-bed for the brave.

There thy mould'ring warrior form
 Rests in the regions of the storm,
 Where the unchain'd tempests roam
 Through their pathless icy home ;
 And with wild unearthly glee
 Chant their mountain-dirge o'er thee.
 While the passing thunder cloud
 Veils thee with a fiery shroud ;
 And the thunder's gathering peal
 Pauses on its heavenly way,
 While spirits of the tempest kneel
 Above thy grave, *Desaix!*

No vulgar ashes blend with thine,
 'Neath nature's ice-bound throne ;
 I would that such a grave were mine,
 That I might sleep alone.
 Not all the royal dust that's hid
 In Egypt's proudest pyramid ;
 Not thy noble sleep is theirs
 In famed Athena's sepulchres ;
 Not where the Roman Cæsars rest,
 Embalm'd within the marble's breast :—
 These are the common tombs of kings,
 Where dark-eyed ruin flaps her wings ;
 O'er each proud sepulchral wonder
 Of Athens and of Rome ;
 Where tyrant's mingling ashes slumber,
 Within death's mould'ring home.

But the fleet-wing'd winds of heaven,
 Pure as a seraph's breath,
 While o'er their snowy summits driven,
 Kiss thy abode of death.
 With thine no despot's ashes rot—
 With thee the vassal slumbers not ;
 Mould'ring with unmingled earth,
 Pure as when nature gave it birth.
 The churchyard breath from charnell'd bones,
 Where death hath built his shadowy thrones,
 Stain not the virgin snows that lie
 Around thy rest eternally.
 'Tis nobler than the ocean tomb
 A thousand fathoms down,
 Hid in the dark and stirless gloom,
 That sand and sea-weed crown.

The daring traveller's step may climb
 Each frowning Alpine steep—
 May scale the eagle cliff sublime,
 Where Danger loves to sleep—
 Still shall his lonely footstep tread
 Lightly o'er thy grassless bed ;
 'Tis like freedom's mountain shrine,
 Where worship burns and breathes divine,
 Where no idle thought intrudes
 'Mid Nature's voiceless solitudes ;
 The eagle wheels around thy rest,
 And hangs his cyrie o'er thy breast.
 The wanderers from thine own bright land,
 And Britain's sea-girt isle,
 Shall give, as o'er thy grave they stand,
 A tear-drop and a smile.

Brave, where all were brave, he stood,
 Amid war's hottest strife,
 And stemm'd red battle's stormy flood,
 But stemm'd it with his life.
 With the proud chivalry of France,
 'Neath the eagle's burning glance,—
 When the Gallic banner waved,
 Ere a world was enslaved,—
 On Marengo's well-fought field,
 Where the Austrian legions reel'd,
 And the soldier's reeking sword
 Waved bloodier at her hero's word,—
 Pall'd in the battle's sulph'rous smoke,
 He rush'd like Courage on,
 With Liberty's resistless shock,
 When tyrants are undone.

Far down the hoary vale of time,
 Amid the wrecks of fame,
 Unstain'd by guilt, unstain'd by crime,
 We mark the hero's name.
 When time and angry winds have rent
 His lonely Alpine monument,
 When no rude relie man shall trace
 That tells the warrior's resting-place ;
 Yet while the glowing annals live,
 That Freedom's blood-red hand does give ;
 Until Napoleon's self decay,
 Thy name shall live with his, Desaix.

Though ruin round thy dwelling rave,
 Thy star-girt name will shine ;
 Sleep on, dear relic of the brave,
 Eternity is thine !”

Whoever peruses the poems of Hugh Brown, cannot fail to be inspired with much of the author's enthusiasm for all that is great and good in the world. Breathing the pure spirit of genuine religion, his productions manifest the warm throbbings of a heart alive to every manly feeling, and deeply impressed with the sacred name of liberty. On closing the little volume, the words of the editor of the Scots Magazine forcibly occurred to us—“ Had the lines of Hugh Brown's destiny been cast in more pleasant places, we doubt not that he would have made no contemptible figure in the eyes of his fellow-men.”

Though comfortable and respectable in his station, Brown is certainly well qualified to occupy a more distinguished position in society ; and though we would by no means wish to create an ambition, or give rise to expectations, without the power of aiding in their realization, we certainly would regard his advancement in the world as no more than a just reward for the industry and talent of which he has afforded so praiseworthy an example. It is in the highest degree creditable to him, that he has endeavoured to accommodate himself to the circumstances in which he has been placed, and unlike many others, without a tittle of his genius, who have become the victims of an irremediable morbidness of sentiment, his chief study seems to have been to “ act well his part” in society—a course which sooner or later is sure to find its own reward.

Since writing the foregoing, we have been favoured with one or two unpublished pieces by Mr Brown, who, amid his multifarious engagements, still finds leisure to unbend himself in occasional homage to Apollo. Among these, the verses to “ Spring,” though a much hackneyed subject, are fresh and glowing as the infant year itself:—

“ SPRING.

The voices of spring are come again,
 And music is ringing o'er hill and glen ;

Nature has doff'd her weeds of woe,
 To dance to the music's ceaseless flow ;
 The wintry gloom of her clouded brow
 Is changed for the smile of gladness now,
 And a thousand pleasant things have birth
 As she glides along o'er the joyous earth.
 With a look of holy love she flings
 O'er the human heart the bliss she brings ;
 With the breeze of health for the sickly one,
 With mirth for the gladsome boy ;
 For the snows of age, a brighter sun,
 And smiles—where the tears of sorrow run ;
 But what for the Poet's joy ?

He strays alone in the sunny hours,
 'Mid the budding leaves and the opening flow'rs,
 That blush with the beauty they half conceal,
 Which the summer suns will yet reveal ;
 From the chambers of earth come gently forth,
 Yet shrink from the dark and stormy North,
 That sweeps along with its fitful breath,
 To kiss them with icy lips of death—
 The last faint efforts of winter's reign,
 And turns to his hall of storms again.
 The snowdrop, the morning star of spring,
 Is lost in the brightening dawn ;
 The violet, daisy, and primrose bring
 Gems for the vernal crown, and fling
 Their beauty o'er cliff and lawn.

Hark to the music in heaven above,
 Where the lark carols high his song of love,
 In thrilling tones that are sweeter far
 Than the softest notes of the light guitar ;
 From the joyous depths of the woodland shade
 The concert of love sweeps down the glade ;
 The hum of the homeward laden bee,
 The gush of the stream, and breeze-shaken tree ;
 While the cuckoo chants his spring-like tone,
 Cheerful, yet sad, like one alone,
 Away, then ! away ! ye thoughts of gloom,
 The sunshine of heaven is here ;
 When the birds and the flowers their loves resume,
 When the promise of nature is written in bloom,
 Then God in his smiles are near.

The glorious clouds, as they sweep on high,
 Rangers at will o'er the boundless sky,

Pour down their treasured tears to earth,
 Like a human heart surcharged with mirth ;
 They cradle the wild incipient storms,
 They mingle and melt to a thousand forms.
 Palace and fortress rise and fall,
 Like phantom shapes at a wizard's call ;
 Shifting and changing they onward stream,
 Fantastic forms of a midnight dream.
 When clustering round the glowing west—
 When the day is waning dim—
 They brightly lean upon ocean's breast ;
 With the sun's last smile as he sinks to rest,
 'Tis an hour for the Poet's hymn."

The next and concluding piece, which we give chiefly because it is a short one, was composed on hearing a Mr Black, a native of Ayrshire, who had been in Palestine, deliver a lecture on the Holy Land. In the course of his interesting remarks, by way of illustrating the manners and character of the Arabs, the lecturer told a story of one of the grandees of Jerusalem having sought the hand of a daughter of one of the chiefs of those wandering tribes. Her reply was—" I will wed with no proud son of the city ; I am a daughter of the desert !"—

“ THE ARAB'S DAUGHTER.

Go, go, into thine ancient halls,
 Where bright eyes on thee smiled ;
 No lord from yon proud city walls
 Can won the Arab's child.
 My father is an Arab chief,
 His heart is brave and true—
 I cannot wake his heart to grief,
 And pangs it never knew.

The desert is the clime I love,
 Where warrior's bows are bent—
 To slumber, when the stars above
 Beam o'er my father's tent.
 Far o'er my native wild I roam,
 Fleet as the wind and free,
 And will not leave that much-loved home
 To wed with one like thee.

My sires are of an ancient race,
 The warrior band is brave ;

With them I spent life's early days,
 With them shall be my grave.
 The daughter of the desert lives
 For dark-hair'd Azophel ;
 And parting free she proudly gives
 Her first her last farewell."

HUGH AINSLIE.

THE fame of this writer is by no means commensurate with his deserts. He was born in the village of Dailly, about the year 1790. His father, George Ainslie, was for a long time in the service of Sir Hew Dalrymple Hamilton, at Bargany. In that neighbourhood—"by Girvan's fairy-haunted stream"—the Poet passed the first nineteen years of his life, receiving such education as the place afforded. In 1809, George Ainslie removed with his family to his native place, Roslin, near Edinburgh. After prosecuting his education in Edinburgh for some months, Hugh was employed as a copying clerk in the Register House in that city, under the auspices of Mr Thomas Thomson, the Deputy Clerk-Register, whose father had been minister of Dailly, and who on that account took an interest in the success of the youth. For such an occupation Ainslie was well fitted, his handwriting being remarkable for beauty, accuracy, and expedition. On the recommendation of Mr Thomson, he was occasionally employed as amanuensis to the celebrated Dugald Stewart, who, having resigned his chair as Professor, lived in elegant retirement at Kin-niel House, a seat of the Duke of Hamilton, about twenty miles distant from Edinburgh. There, in the society of the philosopher and the distinguished persons who visited him, Ainslie passed some months both pleasantly and profitably. If aught annoyed him, it was the repeated transcription of manuscript compositions, which the fastidious taste of Mr Stewart required, but for which

the less refined amanuensis was not disposed to make allowance. Returning to the Register House, he acted for several years as a copying clerk, first under Mr Thomson, and afterwards in that department where deeds are recorded. About this time he married his cousin, Janet Ainslie, an amiable and sensible woman, by whom he has a large family. Constant employment in copying dry legal writings was by no means agreeable to his temperament; so he at length quitted it, and began business on his own account as a brewer in Edinburgh. The concern, after being carried on for about two years, proved unsuccessful. He now resolved on emigrating to the United States of America, to which he proceeded in July 1822. There, after having made the necessary arrangements, he was joined by his wife and children. He acquired a property, to which he gave the name of "Pilgrim's Repose;" but it did not prove to be the resting-place he had anticipated. On the banks of the Ohio, in the neighbourhood of Cincinnati, he afterwards established a brewery. His premises having been accidentally consumed by fire, he energetically set about the rebuilding of them; but, notwithstanding all his efforts, misfortune again overtook him, and now he resides at Louisville.

Ainslie is of an active and enterprising disposition. His manners are lively and pleasing; his person tall and well formed; his countenance handsome and intelligent.

In the summer of 1820, he made a tour from Edinburgh to Ayrshire, in company with two friends; and two years afterwards, when on the eve of emigrating, he published an account of it in a book, consisting of one volume 12mo, entitled "A Pilgrimage to the Land of Burns, . . . with numerous pieces of Poetry, original and selected."* It contains three wood-cut illustrations, from drawings taken by Ainslie, who possesses some

* Throughout the book, the travellers figure under fictitious names. The author, from the length of his person and the activity of his limbs, is called *The Lang Linker*; and his companions, Mr John Gibson and Mr James Welstood, are respectively styled *Jingling Jock* and *Edie Ochiltree*. Welstood, who went to America about the same time as Ainslie, died lately at New York. Gibson did not also cross "the Atlantic's roar," as he appears, from what is said at pages 260 and 271, to have contemplated: he now worthily fills the office of Janitor in the Dollar Institution.

talent as a draughtsman. The bibliographer will be surprised on finding that the book proceeded from the Deptford press. This is accounted for by the fact of the author having had a friend a printer in that place. Owing to his not having enjoyed an opportunity to correct the proof-sheets, the book is disfigured by lapses in grammar, and by incorrect spelling and punctuation. From the want of an influential publisher, it was little noticed beyond the circle of his friends. It did not, however, escape the observation of Mr Robert Chambers, who transferred three of the poetical pieces to his collection of *Scottish Songs*, published in 1829. One of these, "The Rover of Lochryan," was copied with commendation in a review of Mr Chambers's work, which appeared in the same year in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*;* and a wish was at the same time expressed by the Reviewer to know something more of the author. In a subsequent number of the *Journal*,† there appeared an article which began thus:— "When we reviewed Chambers's collection of *Songs and Ballads*, we gave, among other extracts from his volumes, 'The Rover of Lochryan;' and having been particularly struck with the spirit and originality of that song, we expressed a wish to know something more of its author. This wish has been subsequently gratified; and several papers have been placed in our hands, by which we have been enabled to form a more extended and accurate estimate of Ainslie's genius. We are induced now to notice his writings, because we are satisfied that he has produced many things which deserve to be much better known than they are; and because in a work like the *Literary Journal*, which we have always wished to impress with a decidedly national character, we are at all times glad to bring the merits of any of our countrymen before the public, whom accidental circumstances may have hitherto kept too much in the background."

The writer in the *Journal* then proceeded to criticise the "Pilgrimage to the Land of Burns," in terms which are so just and appropriate, that we cannot do better than quote them. He said—"It has only recently been put into our hands; but, on per-

* No. xxxi. p. 18.

† No. xlii. p. 177.

usal, we find in it, together with a good deal of vulgarity and nonsense, many indications of original, though unpruned genius, and a good bold mixture of the ludicrous and the tender. It is a sort of *melange* of prose and poetry, but the poetry is decidedly the superior of the two; indeed without it, the book would be comparatively worthless. In most of the poetic pieces, there is either a breadth of humour, or a gentleness of pathos, or a freedom of thought and expression, which mark a mind of higher susceptibilities than is often met with in common life." To this we shall only add, that, besides a few anecdotes of little value, concerning Burns and the characters he celebrated, the work chiefly consists of incidents which befell the travellers, of descriptions of natural scenery, and of traditions; and that, although the original pieces of poetry are frequently represented as proceeding from his friends, the whole of them, as well as the prose portion, were truly composed by Ainslie himself.*

* As a favourable specimen of the author's prose, and as a pleasing picture of Scottish rural life, we copy the following, only premising that the place described is the residence of the father of Gibson, one of the travellers:—

"The hour had now arrived, when their worthy entertainer proceeded, as was his wont, to wind up the duties of the day, after the fashion so feelingly described in the 'Cottar's Saturday Night.' Any one who has witnessed, in the true spirit of grateful holiness, 'the priest-like father read the sacred page,' must have, with the immortal bard, exclaimed—

' Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the *heart!*'

Pompous display and refined composition, may assist in keeping us awake in our Sunday seats; the eye may be pleased with the orator, and the ear with the oration; still our immortal part is left untouched, to commune at will with the earth. But it is not so when true heart-bred Piety bends before his Maker, and, in the unpolished language of his fathers, pours out his gratitude and praise. He employs no earthly trickery to catch the ear of the creature, as he seems to be aware of no presence but that of God; and should the pious worshipper be heavy with years, leaning, as it were, over the awful edge of eternity, the pouring forth of his soul seems, like the outgoings of Noah's dove, in search of a place where the worn and weary spirit may at last repose in peace. This evening devotion, independent of its eternal utility, appeared to our pilgrims as an admirable partition betwixt the day and night; the quiet, solemn thoughts

We now proceed to give the reader a taste of Mr Ainslie's quality as a Poet ; and the first piece we shall quote is the spirited sea-song previously alluded to :—

“ THE ROVER O' LOCHRYAN.

The Rover o' Lochryan he's gane,
 Wi' his merry men sae brave ;
 Their hearts are o' steel, an' a better keel
 Ne'er bowl'd owre the back o' a wave.

It's no when the loch lies dead in its trough,
 When naething disturbs it ava
 But the rack an' the ride o' the restless tide,
 Or the splash o' the gray sea-maw ;

which it is calculated to produce being a far better and surer guarantee for a sound and dreamless sleep, than when the anxious thoughts or noisy merriment of the day follow us up to our pillow.

The ensuing day being Sunday, our pilgrims, from the absence of that common bustle which distinguishes a country life, were allowed to sleep deeper into the day than they intended. Indeed, in all well-regulated families of the West, those labours or duties of a noisy nature are either executed on Saturday night, or reprieved until Monday, that, as no rude stroke was heard at the building of the house of the Lord, none may disturb the solemn repose of his Sabbath. The kitchen, in particular, undergoes a complete change ; instead of being filled, as on other days, with all sort of sounds, from the chirp of the infant chick up to the boom of the big wheel, you hear only the clatter of your shoe on the sanded floor, the hum of flies, or the buzz of a captive wasp on the window. Without, all undergoes a corresponding change. ‘ The mattock and the loes’ rest by either side of the door ; the plough sticks up to the shoulders in the furrow ; and the cart stands in the court with its shafts reverentially pointed to heaven. Even the lower animals seem, in some degree, tempered to the day ; the old watch dog, having no visiters to announce, no beggars to bark at, lays aside not a little of his everyday din ; while pussy, purring unmolested by the fire, seems, for a time, to have forgotten her week-day wickedness. The ‘ feather'd throng,’ from the removal of those rural sounds that generally mingle with their notes, appear to have a Sabbath song ; the cock crows in a more solemn key, and even the hen, as she tells on the dunghill what she has done in the loft, seems to have a Sunday cackle.

Then may be seen the labouring man, his step slow and broken, with his brawny hands folded up and reposing in his pockets, as he

‘ Walketh forth to view the corn,
 An’ snuff the caller air.’

He hath sold the strength of his arm and the sweat of his brow during six days, but on this he hath no tasker but his own taste—no master but his Maker. He washes away the soil of the hireling, and puts on, with his Sunday coat, a look of reverence and independence.”

It's no when the yawl an' the light skiffs crawl
 Owre the breast o' the siller sea,
 That I look to the west for the bark I lo'e best,
 An' the Rover that's dear to me :

But when that the clud lays its cheeks to the flood,
 An' the sea lays its shouther to the shore,
 When the win' sings high, an' the sea-whaups cry,
 As they rise from the whitening roar—

It's then that I look through the thickening rook,
 An' watch by the midnight tide ;
 I ken the wind brings my Rover hame
 On the sea that he glories to ride.

O merry he sits 'mang his jovial crew,
 Wi' the helm-heft in his hand,
 An' he sings aloud to his boys in blue,
 As his e'e 's upon Galloway's land.

' Unstent an' slack each reef and tack,
 Gie her sail, boys, while it may sit ;—
 She has roar'd through a heavier sea afore,
 An' she'll roar through a heavier yet.

' When landsmen sleep, or wake an' creep,
 In the tempest's angry moan
 We dash through the drift, and sing to the lift
 O' the wave that heaves us on.

' It's brave, boys, to see the morn's blyth e'e,
 When the night's been dark an' drear ;
 But it's better far to lie, wi' our storm-locks dry,
 In the bosom o' her that is dear.

' Gie her sail, gie her sail, till she buries her wale,
 Gie her sail, boys, while it may sit ;—
 She has roar'd through a heavier sea afore,
 An' she'll roar through a heavier yet !''

No living author, Allan Cunningham only excepted, can indite a Scottish ballad so good as the following :—

“ SIR ARTHUR AND LADY ANNE.

Sir Arthur's foot is on the sand,
 His boat wears in the wind,
 An' he's turn'd him to a fair foot-page
 Was standing him behind.

Gae hame, gae hame, my bonnie boy,
 An' glad your mither's e'e,
 I ha'e left anew to weep an' rue,
 Sae there's nane maun weep for thee.

' An' take this to my father's ha',
 An' tell him I maun speed ;
 There's fifty men in chase o' me,
 An' a price upon my head.

' An' bear this to Dunellie's towers,
 Where my love Annic's gane,
 It is a lock o' my brown hair,
 Girt wi' the diamond stane.'

' Dunellie, he has dochters five,
 An' some o' them are fair ;
 Sae, how will I ken thy true love
 Amang sae mony there ?'

' Ye'll ken her by the stately step
 As she gaes up the ha' ;
 Ye'll ken her by the look o' love
 That peers outowre them a' ;

' Ye'll ken her by the braid o' goud
 That spreads o'er her e'e-brcc ;
 Ye'll ken her by the red, red cheek,
 When ye name the name o' me.

' That cheek should lain on this breast-bane—
 That hame should been my ha' ;
 Our tree is bow'd, our flow'r is dow'd—
 Sir Arthur's an outlaw.'

He sigh'd and turn'd him right about,
 Where the sea lay braid and wide ;
 It's no to see his bonnie boat,
 But a wat'ry cheek to hide.

The page has doff'd his feather'd cap,
 But an' his raven hair ;
 An' out there came the yellow locks,
 Like swirls o' the gouden wair.

Syne he's undone his doublet clasp—
 'Twas o' the grass-green hue—
 An', like a lily frae the pod,
 A lady burst in view.

‘ Tell out thy errand now, Sir Knight,
 Wi’ thy love-tokens a’ ;
 If I e’er rin against my will,
 It shall be at a lover’s ea’.’

Sir Arthur’s turn’d him round about,
 E’en as the lady spak’ :
 An’ thrice he dighted his dim e’e,
 An’ thrice he stepped back.

But ae blink o’ her bonnie e’e,
 Out spake his Lady Anne ;
 An’ he’s catch’d her by the waist sac sina’,
 Wi’ the gripe of a drowning man.

‘ O ! Lady Anne, thy bed’s been hard,
 When I thought it the down ;
 O ! Lady Anne, thy love’s been deep,
 When I thought it was flown.

‘ I’ve met my love in the green wood—
 My foe on the brown hill ;
 But I ne’er met wi’ aught before
 I liked sae weel—an’ ill.

‘ O ! I could make a queen o’ thee,
 An’ it would be my pride ;
 But, Lady Anne, it’s no for thee
 To be an outlaw’s bride.’

‘ Ha’e I left kith an’ kin, Sir Knight,
 To turn about an’ rue ?
 Ha’e I shared win’ an’ weat wi’ thee,
 That I maun leave thee now ?

‘ There’s goud an’ siller in this han’
 Will buy us mony a rigg ;
 There’s pearlins in this other han’
 A stately tow’r to big.

‘ Though thou’rt an outlaw frae this lan’,
 The world’s braid and wide.’—
 Make room, make room, my merry men,
 For young Sir Arthur’s bride !”

Our next quotation has a droll beginning and an unexpectedly graceful ending :—

" A BALLAD TO THE BAT.

Thou queer sort o' bird, or thou beast—
 I'm a brute if I ken whilk's thy title—
 Whare gang ye whan morning comes east?
 Or how get ye water or vittle?

Thou hast lang been a ferlic to me,
 An' a droll anc as e'er I inspeckit:
 How is Nature deliver'd o' thee?
 I say, thing, art thou kittl't or cleckit?

By my banes, it leuks right like a lie,
 To say that, without c'er a feather,
 A creature sou'd offer to flee
 On twa or three inches o' leather!

The sangster that says thou art sweet,
 Or rooses thy fashion or featness,
 Maun be blind as the soles o' his feet,
 Or ha'e unea queer notions o' neatness.

Yet at e'en whan the flower had its fill
 O' the dew, an' was gather'd thegither,
 Lying down on its leaf, saft an' still,
 Like a babe on the breast o' its mither;

Then we aft ha'e forgather'd, I trow,
 When my back 'gainst the birk-bush was leaning;
 As my e'e raked the heav'n's deep'ning blue,
 In search o' the sweet star o' c'ning.

For its glint tauld my ain kindly Kate,
 That her laddie was down in the planting;—
 Sae I lo'ed thee as anc lo'es the freet
 That proffers the weather they're wanting.

It's no aye the love warst to bear
 That sticks in the bosom the strongest;
 It's no aye the gaudiest gear
 That lies in the memory the longest.

Even those scenes that enrapture us much
 Are still to some former a hint;
 For beauty itself cannot touch,
 Unless there be sympathy in't."

The following song presents a fine combination of pathos and tenderness:—

“ MARY.

It's dowle in the hint o' hairst
 At the wa'gang o' the swallow,
 When the winds grow cauld, when the burns grow bauld,
 An' the wuds are hingin' yellow;
 But, O! it's dowier far to see
 Tho' wa'gang o' her the heart gangs wi'—
 The deadset o' a shining c'e
 That darkens the weary warl' on thee.

There was muckle luv atween us twa—
 O! twa could ne'er be fonder;
 An' the thing on yird was never made
 That could ha'e gar'd us sunder.
 But the way o' Heav'n's aboon a' ken—
 An' we maun bear what it likes to sen'—
 It's comfort though, to weary men,
 That the warst o' this warl's wacs maun en'.

There's mony things that come an' gac—
 Just kent and just forgotten—
 An' the flow'rs that busk a bonnie brae,
 Gin anither year lie rotten;
 But the last look o' that lovely c'e,
 An' the dying grip she ga'e to me,
 They're settled like eternity:—
 O, Mary! that I were wi' thee!”

At the end of the volume there is a production of some length, entitled the author's “ Last Lay.” It was composed, he tells us, when wandering in Ayrshire by his native stream; and, besides some allusions to his personal history, shows what were the views and feelings which induced him to seek “ a resting-place in the young world of the west.”

But we are not yet done with the expatriated Bard. What follows we take leave to transcribe from the last of the articles in the Edinburgh Literary Journal before referred to:—

“ Since Mr Ainslie went to reside in America, nothing of his has appeared in print on this side of the Atlantic, with the exception of a paper or two in the *Newcastle Magazine*, which he entitled ‘ Feelings of a Foreigner in America.’ He contributes, however, to American publications; and he has, from time to time, transmitted to his

friends at home poetical effusions of great merit, some of which we have now pleasure in making public. We shall begin with a poem which bears date 'January 25th, 1823:'—

LINES WRITTEN ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF BURNS' BIRTH-DAY,

When wandering belated in the Mountain Passes on the Frontiers of Vermont.

When last my feeble voice I raised
To thy immortal dwelling,
The flame of friendship round me blazed,
On breath of rapture swelling!

Now, far into a foreign land,
The heav'ns above me scowling,
The big bough waving like the wand,
The forest caverns howling!

No kindred voice is in mine ear,
No heart with mine is beating;
No tender eye of blue is near,
My glance of kindness meeting;

But woody mountains, towering rude,
Dare heaven with their statures!
'Tis Nature in her roughest mood,
Amidst her roughest features!

Yet thou, who sang'st of nature's charms,
In barrenness and blossom,
Thy strain of love and freedom warms
The chill that's in my bosom.

And here, where tyranny is mute,
And right hath the ascendence,
O! where's the soil could better suit
Thy hymn of independence?

Thou giant 'mong the mighty dead!
Full bowls to thee are flowing;
High souls of Scotia's noble breed
With pride this night are glowing!

In a very different style, but not the less spirited and good, is the following song:—

I'M LIVING YET.

This flesh has been wasted, this spirit been vext,
Till I've wish'd that my deceing day were the next:
But trouble will flee, an' sorrow will flit,
Sae tent me, my lads—I'm living yet!

Ay, when days were dark, and the nights as grim,
 When the heart was dowff, an' the e'e was dim,
 At the tail o' the purse, at the end o' my wit,
 It was time to quit—but I'm living yet !

Our pleasures are constantly gi'en to disease,
 An' Hope, poor thing, aft gets dowie, and dies ;
 While dyester Care, wi' his darkest litt,
 Keeps dipping awa'—but I'm living yet !

A wee drap drink, an' a canty chiel,
 Can laugh at the warl', an' defy the deil ;
 Wi' a blink o' sense, an' a flaught o' wit,
 O ! that's the gear's kept me living yet !

In a similar spirit is

A DECEMBER DITTY.

The merry bird o' simmer's flown,
 Wi' his brave companions a' ;
 Grim Winter has the green leaf stown,
 An' gifted us the snaw.

The big bough sings a dowie sang
 As it swings in the deep'ning drift :
 An' the glint o' day just creeps along
 The ledge o' the leaden lift.

But awa' wi' words in wintry weed,
 An' thoughts that bode o' ill !
 What ! are we o' the forest breed,
 To dow wi' the daffodill ?

Let's roose up, merry days we've seen,
 When carping Care was dumb ;
 Let's think on flowers an' simmers green—
 There's Julys yet to come !

Though my lair is in a foreign land,
 My frien's ayont the sea,
 There's fushion in affection's band
 To draw them yet to me !

The pensive vein of thought which runs through the following poem, contrasts well with the above :—

LINES WRITTEN BY THE RIVER SIDE.

Sweet, sober, solitary nook,
 Where many an hour I stole,
 To read, as in a written book,
 The records of my soul !

Oft when the morn came down the cleugh,
 To gild thy waters clear,
 And birds set up their merry sough,
 Thou'st found me pondering here.

And when the sun lay in the west,
 And dewdrops sought the flower,
 The gowan'd sward I've often press'd
 Within thy hazel bower ;

Sending my weary spirit forth
 Through wilds that lay before,
 And wishing they might be more smooth
 Than those I've wander'd o'er.

These days are done, and I draw near
 My last fond look to take,
 And think of one who often here
 Will wander for my sake.

And when cold winter's blasting look
 Bids summer's sweets depart,
 She'll see within this wither'd nook
 An emblem of my heart ! *

* * * *

We shall give our readers at present only one more specimen of Mr Ainslie's abilities. It is a Scotch song of great merit :—

DAFT DAYS.

' The midnight hour is clinking, lads,
 An' the douce an' the decent are winking, lads,
 Sae I tell ye again,
 Be't weel or ill ta'en,
 It's time ye were quitting your drinking, lads.'

' Gae ben an' mind your gantry, Kate,
 Gie's mair o' your beer and less bantry, Kate ;
 For we vow whar we sit,
 That afore we shall flit,
 We'll be better acquent wi' your pantry, Kate.

' The daft days are but beginning, Kate,
 An' we've sworn (wad ye ha'e us be sinning, Kate ?)
 By our faith an' our houp,
 We shall stick by the stoup
 As lang as a barrel keeps rinnin', Kate.

* The "nook" mentioned in the above is situated on the river Esk, near Roslin. It was a favourite haunt of the author.

' Through spring an' through simmer we moil it, Kate,
 Through hay an' through harvest we toil it, Kate ;
 Sae ye ken, whan the wheel
 Is beginning to squeal,
 It's time for to grease or to oil it, Kate.

' Then score us another drappy, Kate,
 An' gie us a cake to our cappy, Kate ;
 For, by spigot an' pin,
 It were mair than a sin
 To flit when we're sitting sae happy, Kate.' "

Thus far the clever and kindly critic of the year 1829.

The following touching effusion, which has been communicated to us in manuscript, exhibits our author in a very amiable light :—

“ TO MY WIFE AND LITTLE ONES.

Written at New York, during Sickness.

The friendly greeting of our kind,
 Or gentler woman's smiling,
 May sooth a weary wand'rer's mind,
 Some lonely hours beguiling ;—

May charm the restless spirit still,
 The pang of grief allaying ;—
 But, ah ! the soul it cannot fill,
 Or keep the heart from straying.

O ! how the fancy, when unbound,
 On wings of rapture swelling,
 Will hurry to the holy ground
 Where loves and friends are dwelling.

My lonely and my widow'd wife,
 How oft to thee I wander !
 And live again those hours of life,
 When mutual love was tender.

And now with sickness lowly laid,
 All scenes to sadness turning,
 Where will I find a breast like thine,
 To lay the brow that's burning ?

And how'st with you my little ones ?
 How have those cherubs thriven,
 That made my hours of leisure light,
 That made my home like heaven ?

Does yet the rose array your cheeks,
 As when in grief I bless'd you ?
 Or are your cherry lips as sweet,
 As when with tears I kiss'd you ?

Does yet your broken prattle tell—
 Can your young memories gather
 A thought of him who loves you well—
 Your weary, wand'ring father ?

O ! I've had wants and wishes too,
 This world has choked and chill'd ;
 Yet bless me but again with you,
 And half my prayer's fulfill'd."

Mr Ainslie well deserves the space we have devoted to him. In addition to the slight criticism already made, we cannot help noticing the genuine raciness with which he writes in the Scottish dialect. His language shows that he is "to the manner born," and bears no resemblance to that of many mawkish imitators.

Like the writer in the *Literary Journal*, we conclude with expressing the satisfaction it has afforded us to do some justice to a gifted and estimable man, self-exiled from his country. Should these pages ever meet his eye, we doubt not that it will gratify him to perceive, after an absence of eighteen years, that his genius is not destined to pass unappreciated in his native land, and that his name has found a place in the roll of the Poets of Ayrshire.

[Since the beginning of this notice was printed, we have learnt that Mr Ainslie held his situation in the Register-House till the time when he emigrated, and that he was not engaged in the brewing business in Edinburgh on his own account—he merely resided on the premises of his father-in-law, a brewer, and kept his books. We may also mention, that he was born, not in the village of Dailly, but at Bargany Mains, in the parish of Dailly, and that, when he left his native place, he was only about seventeen years of age.]

REV. HAMILTON PAUL.

THE REV. HAMILTON PAUL was born on the 10th of April 1773, in a neat little cottage* delightfully situated on the right bank of the water of Girvan, about a quarter of a mile from the house of Bargany, in the parish of Dailly and district of Carrick. He received the rudiments of his education at the parish school, and finished his academical studies at the University of Glasgow; was licensed to preach the gospel in the year 1800, and ordained minister of the united parish of Broughton, Glenholm, and Kilbucko, in 1813.

It is not our intention to enter into a formal history of the reverend gentleman's life. We mean to view him chiefly as a Poet, or a writer of verses. Mr Paul was the College friend and companion of the author of "The Pleasures of Hope." They were both versifiers at that early period, but not rivals in poetical composition. Campbell became a professed poet, Hamilton Paul only an amateur. The two friends entered into a compact not to write on the same subject at the same time, and thus they should avoid becoming competitors for the same prize. When Campbell set about composing "The Pleasures of Hope," Paul wrote a satirical, or rather humorous, Epistle, on the mania which seized the fair sex in Glasgow of attending Philosophical Lectures in Anderson's Institution, or University, recently opened. When students in the humanity class, they both translated "Claudian's Epithalamium on the Marriage of Honorius and Maria," and both carried the prize. When spending the summer recess of College in Argyleshire, they corresponded in prose and verse. One or two extracts from their epistolary intercourse at this period may not be uninteresting. Campbell complained that his fellow-student wrote too little, and thus exhorted him in one of his epistles:—

* Hugh Ainslie was born in the same dwelling.

“ Unless you write longer letters and more poems, I will send a formal message to the kind Nymphs of Parnassus, telling them, that whereas Hamilton Paul, their favourite and admired laureate of the North, has been heard at divers times and in sundry manners to express his admiration of certain Nymphs in a certain place, and that the said Hamilton Paul has ungratefully and feloniously neglected to speak with due reverence of the ladies of Helicon; that said Hamilton Paul shall be deprived of all aid, in future, from these goddesses, and be sent to draw his inspiration from the dry fountain of earthly Beauty; and that, furthermore, all the favours taken from the said Hamilton Paul shall accrue to the informer and petitioner. .

* * * *

“ I expect you will write me very soon, and prevent me from giving the intended information to Parnassus, by producing some certain proof that you honour the Muses as formerly. Remember your agreement at parting with your sincere friend,

T. C.”

In a subsequent epistle, Campbell says—

“ Your verses ‘ On the Unfortunate Lady’ I read with secret pleasure, for ‘ there is a joy in grief, when peace dwelleth in the breast of the sad.’ They are beautifully descriptive of such a situation; but what lady you allude to, I have not ingenuity to guess. Morose as I am in judging of poetry, I could find nothing inelegant in the whole piece. I hope you will in your next (since you are such a master of the plaintive) send me some verses consolatory to a hermit; for my sequestered situation sometimes stamps a firm belief on my mind that I am actually an anchorite. In return for your welcome poetical effusion, I have nothing at present but a chorus of the Jephthes of Buchanan, written soon after my arrival in Mull:—

“ Glassy Jordan, smoothly meandering
Jacob’s grassy meads between;
Lo! thy waters, gently wandering,
Lave thy valleys rich and green.

When the winter, keenly show’ring,
Strips fair Salem’s holy shade,
There thy current, broader pouring,
Lingers ’mid the leafless glade.

When, O! when, shall light returning,
Gild the melancholy gloom?
And the golden star of morning,
Yonder solemn vault illumine?

When shall Freedom, holy charmer,
Cheer my long-benighted soul?
When shall Israel, proud in armour,
Burst the tyrant’s base control? &c.

“ The similarity of the measure with that of your last, made me think of sending you this piece. I am much hurried at present with my comedy, the *Clouds* of Aristo-

phanes. I have already finished my Translation of the Chæphoræ of Æschylus. I dreamt a dream about you being before Parnassus, upon your trial for sedition and contumacy. I thought Thalia, Clio, &c., addressed you. Their speeches shall be nonsensified into rhyme, and shall be part of some other scrawl from your affectionate friend,

THOMAS THE HERMIT."

These extracts are sufficient to show that the fellow-students were on habits of the most intimate friendship.

When at College, Mr Paul composed a variety of small poems, which found their way into newspapers and other periodicals. As the author wrote generally on commission, or at the desire of some friend or fair one, his effusions ought to be entitled verses rather than poems. The specimens we select exhibit a greater versatility of talent and facility of versification, than capacity to reach the sublimer flights of poetical aspiration. He attempted every kind of subject and every species of measure. "An Advice to a Young Lady fond of displaying herself at her window"—"Farewell to a College Gown"—"A Description of the Logic Class"—"Translations from the Greek and Latin Classics," with a few amorous ditties, were his exercises at the University. When his "Epistle to the dearly beloved, the Female Disciples," made its appearance, Professor Richardson thus addressed him in a note—"Your poem possesses great merit, in respect of language, fancy, versification;" and Professor Jardine asked as a favour that he would lend him his "Description of the Logic Class" for a few days. It created a great sensation among the students.

Some of Mr Paul's verses having found their way to Inverary Castle, and Lady Charlotte Campbell (now Lady Charlotte Bury) having expressed a wish to see some more of his pieces, he wrote the ballad entitled the "Maid of Inverary," in honour of that lady, who was much celebrated for her beauty. Some young gentlemen in Campbeltown composed a tune for it, and a young divine wrote an elaborate criticism upon it, pointing out its beauties and faults.

While at Inverary, Mr Paul wrote "The Lovely Exile"—"Verses on the High Tide" which had wellnigh swept away the town—"Elegiac Lines on an Unfortunate Lady," alluded to in the letter of Thomas Campbell—"Complimentary Epistle to

the Rev. John Ferguson (afterwards minister of Uphall) on his marriage—"A Farewell to the Beauties of Argyle," in the style of Shenstone's pastoral ballad—and several other pieces.

Having spent two eventful years in the Highlands, and met with many singular adventures among the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the noble and the mean, he and the Poet of Hope resumed their studies at their *Alma Mater*. It was about this time, on entering the Divinity Hall, that Mr Paul wrote his "Farewell to a College Gown," which was printed in the *Glasgow Courier*, *The Phoenix*, and other periodicals—"Palemon and Amanda"—"Kilgrammie, or my True Love's Grave"—"Dalquharran, or the Sickle of the Vale"—"The Hill of Heroes, and other Legendary Tales"—as also "Paul's Epistles," the title of which was considered somewhat profane by one or two divines.

Having become a preacher of the gospel, he spent the greater part of his time in Ayrshire, till he was appointed to his present cure. The poetical productions of our author during the thirteen years of his life as a probationer, are almost too numerous for us to name. They found their way into newspapers, magazines, volumes of sermons; and some of them, in manuscript, might be found in the possession of natives of Scotland, especially of Ayrshire, on the Lakes of Canada, the Banks of the Hudson and the Rappahannock, the Blue Mountains of Jamaica, and the Plains of Hindostan. His amorous ditties during this period were many, and generally admired by the fairest of judges, who hinted to him their ambition to become the themes of his song. "Helen Gray," "The Maid of Colmonell," "The Lass of Carrick Shore," "The Bonnie Lass of Barr," "Marion," "Jeanie's Awa'," "The Lovely Cottage Maid," and innumerable others, were of this description.

In 1801, Burns's friend and patron, John Ballantine, Esq., instituted the Allowa' Club, with the view of regularly celebrating the anniversary of the Poet's birth. Mr Paul was solicited to furnish an annual ode, which he did for nine years. He was also laureate to the Glasgow Ayrshire Friendly Society, whose annual meeting took place on Burns's anniversary, to whom he presented

about a dozen of odes, but was present at only one of their meetings. When Chalmers, who was engaged in preparing his *Caledonia* for publication, saw the ninth ode in the *Ayr Advertiser*, he wrote from London to Major Webster, saying "I would give all Ayrshire for a copy" of the previous odes. When the author was informed by Major Webster of the request of Chalmers, he said "he would be contented with a single farm." We have seen a kind of concentration of the spirit of the different poems, called "An Irregular Anniversary Ode, sacred to the memory of Burns," in Wilson and M'Cormick's edition of Burns's Poems. This edition has had the merit of calling forth some of the finest specimens of written eloquence that the English language can produce,* directed against, or in favour of, the reverend gentleman who had the audacity to utter a word in praise of the Bard of Coila.

Since the appointment of Mr Paul to the pastoral charge of Broughton, Glenholm, and Kilbucho, he has written a variety of short pieces in verse, and published the "Foretaste of Pleasant Things," "Specimens of a New Metrical Version of the Psalms of David," "Forget me not," "Jenie o' the Crook," "The Beauty of Lorrain," "The Delicate Refusal," "Lines addressed to the Daughters of Neighbouring Baronets," "Elegiac Verses on the Death of Lord Montgomery, Lady Elizabeth Montgomery, the Earl of Eglinton," "Epistles to Taylor, a brother Bard," and a great number of *jeux-d'esprit* at convivial meetings, of which hardly any copies are to be procured. When he was joint proprietor and editor of the *Ayr Advertiser*, he was in the habit of inserting in the columns of that journal occasional metrical productions, and often sent his acceptances or apologies, when invited to parties, in rhyme, almost without premeditation.

The most remarkable instance of Mr Paul's facility at versifying, is the following:—He preached at Maybole on a Sabbath evening; and, immediately after sermon, was preparing to set out for Ayr on foot, when two young ladies arrested him, saying, that if he would stay and drink tea with them at the manse, they would

* *Vide* Christian Instructor, Blackwood's Magazine, &c.

set him down at the Auld Brig of Doon—six miles on his way—as their sister was to send the carriage for them. He was prevailed on to stay tea; but the carriage did not come, as the evening was uncommonly fine, and the distance from their brother-in-law's only three miles. However, the Preacher behoved to see the kind-hearted ladies home. They arrived there at nine o'clock; and no sooner did they enter the hospitable mansion, than the Laird called out—"Supper this instant." At eleven o'clock, when the ladies were retiring, the mistress of the family said to the guest—"I will have no peace in my mind, if you leave my house at this late hour, to walk six miles." "I will send you, madam, a line by to-morrow's post, apprising you of my fate." Half an hour before post-time, next day, he took pen in hand to write a short card in prose to the lady who took such an interest in his welfare; and, lo! the result:—

" My dearest Madam, yesternight
I pat you in an unco fright,
Lest, as I left your house sae late,
I should mistak' or tyne the gate;
And mak' a *night erratic* tour
By Minnieboll, or to Dunure;
Or be by early fisher found,
In Doon, wi' broken neck, or drown'd.

But, Madam, banish a' sic fear,
For safe and sound your minstrel's here,
Quite sane, in mind and body baith,
Uninjured by ae waff o' seaith.
For, trusting to the care o' Heaven,
About ten minutes past eleven,
I left your hospitable dome,
A midnight wanderer to roam.

As near to Blairston Parks I drew,
An apparition met my view;
'Twas white as snow, or lady's smock,
Or lamb, the pride of fleecy flock.
I louted down to lift a stane,
I raised my head, the thing was gane;
It was no supernatural wight,
But animal that prowls by night;
Poor puss, perhaps, whom hunger's edge
Impell'd to seek the thorny hedge,

In hopes to spoil the linnet's nest,
Or herry the goldfinch's nest.

To Newark, as I trudged along,
The wood-lark cheer'd me with his song ;
How sweet, how charming are the notes,
As through the air the songster floats !
Sic notes in our new Kirk prevail,
When warbled by the vocal Gale.*

Next to the Auld Brig straught I march,
And gain the keystone of the arch ;
I eyed the ever-restless stream,
Where gently play'd the morning beam,
The woods, in green and dusky hue,
Half-met, half-faded from my view ;
While through the trees, with modest pride,
Gleam'd the fair mansion of Doonside,
I call'd to mind, with heart subdued,
The sleeping beauty in the wood.

To Allowa' next my footstep turns,
And here I greet the shade of Burns ;
I pass the Kirk wi' cannie care,
But deil a deil or witch was there.

Next to the cot I hurry on,
Intent to wauken drouthy John ;
But fearing, lest, 'twish light and dark,
Flora should meet me in her sark,
I frae the strong temptation flee,
And finish my *night errantry*.

The corneraiks rail in ilka field,
And laverocks sweetest music yield ;
I reach the town when Wallace' Tower
Proclaim'd the second morning hour ;
But as the guard now winds his horn,
My winding up must be forborne ;
Accept, dear Ma'am, this hasty scrawl,
Just written by the hand of Paul ;
Let me with love remember'd be
By all the Sauchrie family."

The above, the work of half an hour, was despatched by the post.

* The Precentor.

During the three years that Mr Paul superintended the publication of the *Ayr Advertiser*, he was whirled about in a perpetual vortex of business and pleasure—never a single day without company, at home or abroad. If he could obtain three or four hours' sleep out of the four-and-twenty, he was satisfied. He was a member of every Club—chaplain to every Society—had a free ticket to every concert and ball, and was a welcome guest at almost every table—preached frequently in town and country, and taught Latin and French to grown up Masters and Misses. It was previous to his connexion with the newspaper that he published his poem on “Vaccination, or Beauty Preserved,” and several smaller productions. When chaplain to the battalion of Riflemen or Sharpshooters, he sometimes addressed to the corps martial strains of a patriotic description.

Hamilton Paul, during the early part of his literary and clerical career was tutor in five different families, and assistant to about as many parish ministers; but, viewing him only as a Poet, we omit noticing his prose works or pulpit exhibitions. A Professor of Divinity in one of our large towns has stated, that while he was Mr Paul's class-fellow and fellow-lodger, he saw him begin to compose a Latin oration at ten o'clock on Friday night, which he finished at seven on Saturday morning, without opening a dictionary; and, not having time to transcribe it, delivered it from the pulpit at nine o'clock that day, and carried the prize, although some of his competitors had spent the preceding summer in preparing theirs. Though often solicited to publish sermons, he complied only once.

Of the numerous poetical effusions of Mr Paul, want of space prevents our giving more than one or two specimens:—

“ HELEN GRAY.

Fair are the fleecy flocks that feed
 On yonder heath-clad hills,
 Where wild meandering crystal Tweed
 Collects his glassy rills.
 And sweet the buds that scent the air,
 And deck the breast of May;
 But none of these are sweet or fair,
 Compared to Helen Gray.

Yon see in Helen's face so mild,
 And in her bashful mien,
 The winning softness of the child,
 The blushes of fifteen.
 Her witching smile, when prone to go,
 Arrests me, bids me stay ;
 Nor joy, nor comfort can I know,
 When rest of Helen Gray.

I little thought the dark-brown moors,
 The dusky mountain's shade,
 Down which the wasting torrent pours,
 Conceal'd so sweet a maid ;
 When sudden started from the plain
 A sylvan scene and gay,
 Where, pride of all the virgin train,
 I first saw Helen Gray.

* * *

May never Envy's venom'd breath
 Blight thee, thou tender flower !
 And may thy head ne'er droop beneath
 Affliction's chilling shower !
 Though I the victim of distress
 Must wander far away ;
 Yet, till my dying hour, I'll bless
 The name of Helen Gray.

ADDITIONAL STANZA,

Addressed to MISS GEORGINA CRAWFORD of Doonside, on hearing her sing the above.

And thou, dear maid, thy mellow throat,
 Like wood-lark's, sweetly tune ;
 And bid the breezes bear each note
 Along the banks of Doon.
 The nymph of Tweed adorn'd by thee,
 Will shine in best array ;
 While, fondly listening, I shall be
 More charm'd with Helen Gray."

The subject of the poem is still flourishing in health and beauty,
 but the songstress is sleeping in the dust.

" THE BONNIE LASS OF BARR.

Written at the suggestion of the Rev. Charles Cunningham, Minister of Dailly.

Of streams that down the valley run,
 Or through the meadow glide,

Or glitter to the summer sun,
 The Stinshar* is the pride.
 'Tis not his banks of verdant hue,
 Though famed they be afar ;
 Nor grassy hill, nor mountain blue,
 Nor flower bedropt with diamond dew ;
 'Tis she that chiefly charms the view,
 The bonnie Lass of Barr.

When rose the lark on early wing,
 The vernal tide to hail ;
 When daisies deck'd the breast of spring,
 I sought her native vale.
 The beam that gilds the evening sky,
 And brighter morning star,
 That tells the king of day is nigh,
 With mimic splendour vainly try
 To reach the lustre of thine eye,
 Thou bonnie Lass of Barr.

The sun behind yon misty isle,
 Did sweetly set yestreen ;
 But not his parting dewy smile
 Could match the smile of Jean.
 Her bosom swell'd with gentle wo,
 Mine strove with tender war,
 On Stinshar's banks while wild woods grow ;
 While rivers to the ocean flow ;
 With love of thee my heart shall glow,
 Thou bonnie Lass of Barr."

In former days, it was customary for the clergy, at Presbytery dinners, to give song about. When Mr Paul was called upon in his turn to give one, the father of the Presbytery said—"It must be your own composition." Mr Meek, minister of Dunsyre, was on the right hand of the croupier, (Mr Paul,) and had been recently married to Miss Barbara Mark. It was his first appearance at the Presbytery after his marriage, and he was fined in a bottle of wine. The author thus began to recite his song, almost extempore:—

"O! sirs, what is this has occur'd at Dunsyre,
 That has set a' yon side o' the country on fire?"

* The English read it *Stinshar*, which induced Burns to change the name to that of *Lugar*. Girvan was the stream meant by Burns.

And the priest, too, the spark that has kindled the flame ;
 For the day he was married his Babby cam' hame.

But, Willie, dear callan, O ! fash na your thoom,
 Though frien's at a distance wha hear it should gloom ;
 Your face needna flush wi' the blushes o' shame,
 Though the day ye were married your Babby cam' hame.

We a' wad ha'e thought you a short-sighted spark,
 After aiming sae weel, had you missed your Mark ;
 We fine you, 'tis true, but we daurna you blame,
 Though the day ye were married your Babby cam' hame.

Ere a twalmont hae gae round, (though nae spae-man am I)—
 But drap na a tear though your Babby should cry—
 I will venture to wad onie sum ye can name,
 We shall hear that your dear Babby's baby's come hame."

The last line proved prophetic.

John Balfour, Esq. of Sauchrie, and Hamilton Boswell, Esq. of Garrallan, came to the author one morning, in a state of great excitement. "What do you think," said they, "the Road Trustees have done? They have sold the Auld Brig o' Doon as a quarry to the contractor for the New Bridge. You must devise means to save the Auld Brig from demolition, and that immediately." Mr Paul wrote the "Petition of the Auld Brig o' Doon," which was printed and circulated throughout the county; and in two or three days, ten noblemen and gentlemen subscribed a hundred guineas, and others smaller sums, in order to re-purchase the materials of the Auld Brig and to keep it in repair. The subscriptions, we believe, were never paid, the Trustees having allowed the contractor for the New Bridge to open a quarry elsewhere. Some dozen of years after, the water of the Doon had eneroached so much on the buttresses of the Auld Brig, as to threaten its overthrow. Mr David Auld, an enthusiast in the cause of Burns, applied to a new set of Trustees for money to prevent the menaced ruin of the ancient fabric; but they told him that as it was only a private footpath, they would not be justifiable in giving the public money for any such purpose. Mr Auld then produced the Petition which had formerly saved the Brig. of the existence of which they were ignorant; on reading

which they contributed out of their own pockets as much money as put the fine old arch in a complete state of repair. The Petition was published in Chambers's Journal, No. 54, and in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of Burns, copied from Chambers. It is as follows :—

“ PETITION OF THE AULD BRIG O' DOON.

Must I, like modern fabrics of a day,
Decline, unwept, the victim of decay ?
Shall my bold arch, which proudly stretches o'er
Doon's classic stream, from Kyle to Carrick's shore,
Be suffer'd in oblivion's gulf to fall,
And hurl to wreck my venerable wall ?
Forbid it, ev'ry tutelary power,
That guards my keystone at the midnight hour ;
Forbid it ye, who, charm'd by Burns's lay,
Amid those scenes can linger out the day.
Let Nanny's sark and Maggy's mangled tail
Plead in my cause, and in that cause prevail.
The man of taste who comes my form to see,
And curious asks, but asks in vain for me ;
With tears of sorrow will my fate deplore,
When he is told ' the Auld Brig is no more.'
Stop, then ; O ! stop, the more than Vandal rage
That marks this revolutionary age,
And bid the structure of your fathers last,
The pride of this, the boast of ages past ;
Nor ever let your children's children tell,
By your decree the fine old fabric fell.

Or, secondly,

By your neglect the fine old fabric fell.”

It would be no difficult matter to fill a volume with selections from the numerous effusions of our author, embracing every variety of subject, the grave, the gay, the witty, and the sentimental ; but our limits will not admit of farther quotation. His poetical correspondents were numerous. The letters from Mr Taylor, already alluded to, are in a very happy and humorous strain. From the specimens given, it is evident the author might have executed some work of utility ; and perhaps it is not yet too late to expect something valuable from his pen. A reverend Doctor once told him that, if he could be shut up in a prison,

like George Buchanan in the cells of the Inquisition, he might rival the poet and Scottish historian. Otherwise, we may conclude our remarks in the words of Mr Dunlop's* epitaph on Douglas Duke of Hamilton—

“ O, gifts neglected ! talents misapplied ! ”

except in the composition of sermons.

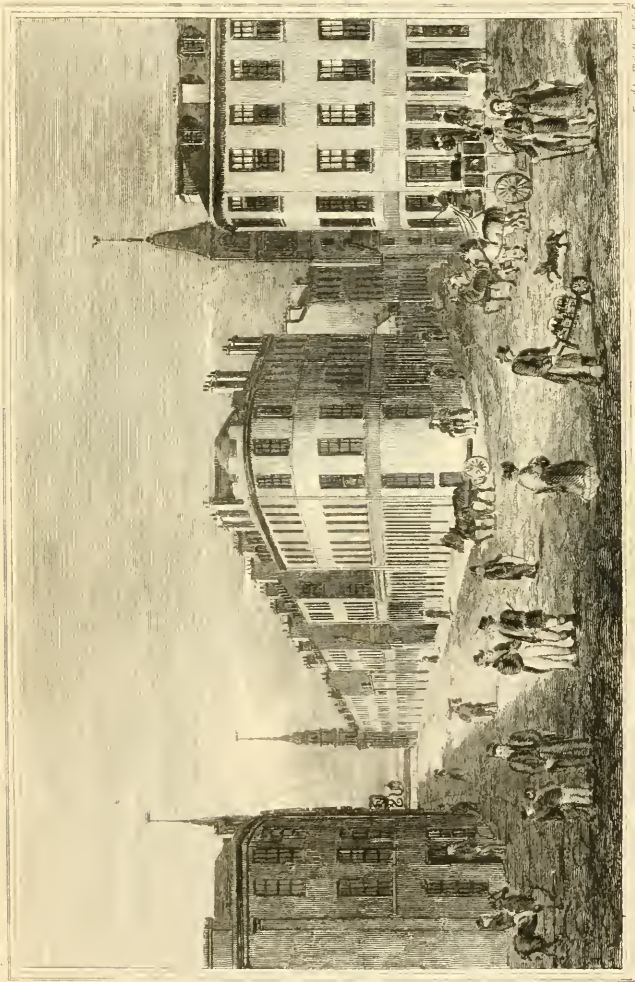
ARCHIBALD M'KAY,

AUTHOR OF “ DROUTHY TAM,” &c.

THE author of the above graphic “ tale in verse,” and several other popular poems, was born at Kilmarnock in 1801. At school he received the common rudiments of education, and was early apprenticed to the trade of weaving. Fond of reading, he assiduously devoted his leisure hours to the acquisition of knowledge; and, by attending private classes, succeeded in attaining a pretty accurate knowledge of English grammar and the principles of composition. The constant fluctuations to which weaving has been subject, since the termination of the last war, and the low price of labour even when business is comparatively good, led him to seek after a more congenial and profitable employment. Having obtained some instruction in the art of book-binding, he soon became so good a tradesman as to be able to commence working on his own account; and in this line still continues to prosecute business in his native place.

We have to speak of Mr M'Kay, however, in another light than that of an ingenious mechanic—he is a Poet; and well en-

* John Dunlop, Esq., author of “ Here's to the Year that's Awa',” wrote a beautiful epitaph on the Duke of Hamilton.



Engr. by J. P. Wilson, Edin.

Drawn by Robt. Chambers, Junr, Archd.

KING STREET & c. KILMARNOCK.

Printed by Hugh Dalton, Her Majesty's Printer & Golds. 1840

titled to occupy a place among the Bards of Ayrshire. His first publication, "Drouthy Tam," which appeared in 1828, was so well received, that it was found necessary, in the course of a few weeks, to publish a second edition. It has since gone through a third; and has, we understand, again become scarce. About two thousand copies, in whole, of the poem have been sold. The popularity and success of "Drouthy Tam," is, without doubt, to be ascribed as much to the attractive nature of the subject, and the local circumstances connected with it, as to any originality or depth of poetic genius it possesses. The poem, suited to the capacities of every reader, however, is of that peculiar kind that takes a retentive hold of the memory, and is, on that account, destined to hold a place in the public mind when more laboured productions will have sunk into oblivion. Although the poem can be best appreciated by those who reside in the locality where the characters who figure in it are known; yet, like Wilson's "Watty and Meg," and M'Neil's "Will and Jean," it will suit the taste and please the fancy of every "son of Caledonia." Some of the stanzas are not inferior to those of M'Neil or Wilson; and the moral which it inculcates is as forcibly delineated as that of "Scotland's Skaith."

The hero, Drouthy Tam, and the other members of the "drucken squad"—

" Pate the Pedlar,
Tailor Rab, and Ringan Gray;
Hab the Nailer, Jock the Fiddler,
Wabster Will, and mony mac"—

are well hit off. Some of them are alive, and still reside in "auld Killic," as busily intent on the intoxicating pleasures of the dram-shop as ever. An individual accosting Wabster Will lately at the Cross of Kilmarnock—the favourite haunt of the squad—among other questions, asked him how long he had been on the "fuddle," to which the wight promptly replied, "that he had never been sober since the battle of Waterloo!"

The writings of our author, though producing little or no effect on the corps themselves, have doubtless restrained many from following in their footsteps. The friends of temperance, conse-

quently, owe him a debt of gratitude as the first advocate of their cause in Ayrshire. The reasoning of the philosopher, and the calm reflection of the moralist, are interwoven in the poem with the drunken clamour and midnight brawl of the ale-house. The scene in Watty's is well depicted :—

“ In they gaed ae night to Watty's,
Howf o' mony a drucken spree,
Tauld their cracks, and sung their ditties,
'Midst the charms o' barley brec.

Usquebae and warming nappy
Brighten'd ev'ry face wi' glee ;
Ilka heart was blythe and happy,
Gladness beam'd in ilka e'e.

Neist the ingle sat the nailer,
Wi' his crony Pedlar Pate,
Thrang debating wi' the tailor
'Bout the taxes o' the state.

Hab, deep read in hist'ry's pages,
Spak' o' times when men were free ;
Spak' o' wars and Roman sages
Wha Oppression scorn'd to dree ;

Spak' o' days when Bruce and Wallace
Nobly bang'd their southron foes ;
When on Scotland's hills and valleys
Freedom's banner proudly rose ;

Prick-the-Louse, in words prophetic,
Spak' o' years o' coming bliss ;—
' Ah !' said Hab, wi' voice pathetic,
' Time can but our wants increase.

' If taxation, debt, and slavery,
Happiness to man can gie ;
If enjoyment flow frae knavery,
Then we yet may happy be.'

Up gat Tammie in a passion—
Deep disputes he couldna bear—
' Quit your bleth'ring on taxation,
Let us drink—our hearts to cheer.

' Politics may yield a pleasure,
But the magic o' the glass

Charms the social hours o' leisure,
Fills the heart wi' sweeter bliss.

' Noble souls are they that prize it—
Social lovers o' their kind ;
Nane but fools wad e'er despise it—
Whisky elevates the mind.'

While he spak' this random blether
'Bout the charms o' usquebac,
Into Watty's flew his mither,
Wi' a look o' deepest wac.

' Tam,' quoth she, ' O ! cease thy sinnin' ;
Cease thy vile unhallow'd strains,
Meg, puir thing, this waefu' e'enin'
Bore to thee twa helpless weans.

' Great, alas ! is her vexation—
Thochts o' thee increase her grief ;
Haste, and yield her consolation ;
Her distress demands relief.'

But our hero—now unfeeling—
Laugh'd to scorn her tale so sad ;
And, in dissipation reeling,
Thus address'd the drucken squad :—

' Come, my billies, seize your glasses,
Drink the purest joys can gie ;
Let us now forget distresses—
Let us spend the night in glee.'

Then the blythesome soun' o' gladness
Through the yill-house loudly rang ;
Fled was ilka thoecht o' sadness,
Nought but mirth was them amang.

Ringan in a neuk was singing,
Jock his fiddle tuned wi' glee,
Watty in the drink was bringing,
Laughin' loud the fun to see.

Tammie, cheerfu' and unthinkin',
Sent the flowing glasses roun' ;
Sic a nicht o' sport and driukin'
Nc'er was seen in Killie town."

In 1832, Mr M'Kay published a small volume of poems, which met a good reception from the public. Among the pieces in this volume is the poem of Allan and Helen, which bears a striking resemblance, in the fluency and sweetness of its versification, to the popular old ballad of "Sir James the Rose." Full of dramatic point, it has been recited with much success at various places of entertainment throughout Ayrshire; and has earned for its author considerable local reputation.

As a specimen of the song-writing of our author, we extract

" MY AULD UNCLE WATTY.

TUNE—*Bonnie Dundee.*

O! weel I ha'e mind o' my auld uncle Watty,
 When but a bit callan I stood by his knee,
 Or clamb the big chair, where at e'enin' he sat aye;
 He made us fu' blythe wi' his fun and his glee:
 For O! he was knackie, and couthie, and crackie,
 Baith humour and lair in his noddle had he—
 The youths o' the clachan he'd keep a' a-laughin',
 Wi' his queer observations and stories sae sleet.

The last Hogmanay that we met in his cottie,
 To talk owre the past, and the nappy to pree,
 Some auld-farrant sangs, that were touchin' and witty,
 He sung, till the bairnies were dancin' wi' glee;
 And sync in the dance, like a youngster o' twenty,
 He lap and he flang wi' auld Nannie Macfee—
 In a' the blythe meeting nae anc was sae canty,
 Sac jokin', sae gabby, sae furthy, and free.

And O! had ye seen him that e'enin' when Rory
 Was kipped to Maggie o' Riccarton Mill;
 Wi' jokes rare and witty he kept up the glory,
 Till morning's faint glimmer was seen on the hill.
 O! he was a body, when warm'd wi' the toddy,
 Whase wit to ilk bosom enchantment could gie;
 For funnin' and daffin', and punnin' and laughin',
 Throughout the hale parish nae equal had he.

But worn out at last wi' life's cares and its labours,
 He bade an adieu to his frien's a' sae dear,
 And sunk in death's sleep, sair bewail'd by his neebors,
 Wha yet speak his praise, and his mem'ry revere.

Whar slumbers the dust o' my auld auntie Matty,
 We dug him a grave wi' the tear in our e'e;
 And there laid the banes o' my auld uncle Watty,
 To moulder in peace by the big aiken-tree."

Possessed of a correct ear, Mr M'Kay has made several successful attempts in blank verse. The following little fragment is among the latest of his productions :—

“ A WISH.

Give me the friend whose inmost soul delights
 In others' weal, and mourns for others' wo;
 Who no distinction sees 'tween man and man,
 Save that which virtue has alone created;
 Who looks beyond the ties of blood or home,
 And views each human being as a brother.

Give me the friend whose eye, enraptured, scans
 The rich, the boundless, varied charms of nature;
 Who, in the meanest flower that scents the gale,
 Beholds the power and majesty of God,
 And finds materials for lofty thought
 In all that meets his captivated gaze.

Give me the friend whose mind has been enlarged
 At sober Contemplation's sacred shrine;
 Who frequent cons the glowing classic page
 With all a poet's fervency and joy,
 And, through this blissful medium, communes
 With bards and sages of departed years.

Give me the friend whose heart hath felt the bliss
 That Science to her votaries imparts;
 Who loves to roam excursive after truth,
 And sees, where'er he turns his thoughtful eye,
 The wisdom and benevolence of Him
 ' Who at a word spoke all into existence.'

Yes! give me such a friend, with whom to share
 The rural walk on summer's silent eve,
 Or hold sweet converse by the blazing hearth,
 When winter, wrapt in storms and tempests, reigns;
 Then, though my lot in penury be cast,
 The charms of calm Contentment will be mine."

But Mr M'Kay is, perhaps, a better prose writer than he is a

Poet ; and, if fortune had been more propitious to him at the outset of his career, his talent might have secured for him a much higher and more intellectual mode of life.

Some years ago, a debating club was instituted in Kilmarnock, called "The Forensic Society." Mr M'Kay, who was a member of this club, for some time held the office of secretary, and produced several essays on political and other subjects, which, displaying the fertile sources of his well-cultivated mind, gained for him the friendship and esteem of all.

JAMES STIRRAT.

JAMES STIRRAT, one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the Ayrshire Poet, and who has celebrated his praise in several songs and odes of no ordinary merit, is well known in the district of Cunningham for his poetical taste and genius, several of his songs and minor pieces having appeared in various periodicals. He was born in Dalry in 1781, of which place he is now postmaster. His father, the late James Stirrat, merchant in Dalry, was a man of respectable character, and had considerable talents for business.

The subject of the present memoir was educated at the parish school of Dalry, and early showed an inclination to cultivate the Muse. When he was about seventeen years of age, he composed several pieces on subjects of a local and personal character, which evinced no small degree of power, and were much admired among his friends. He has written songs to several popular Scottish melodies, which only require to be known to ensure popularity ; but, though often solicited, he has hitherto declined coming before the public, in his own name, as an author. We have been favoured with a perusal of a collection of his pieces, in manuscript, and hope that at some future period it will be added to the stores of the provincial Muse. As a proof of Mr Stirrat's admiration

for Burns, we may mention that he wrote songs for the Anniversary of the Poet, for the years 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1830, all of which are conceived in excellent taste, and have an originality which many of the productions on similar occasions confessedly want. We are sure our readers will be much gratified with the following song, written for the Anniversary of 1829 :—

AIR—*There's nae luck about the house.*

“ There's nae bard to charm us now,
 Nae bard ava,
 Can sing a sang to Nature true
 Since Coila's bard's awa.

The simple harp o' earlier days
 In silence slumbers now ;
 And modern art, wi' tuneless lays,
 Presumes the Nine to woo.

But nae bard in a' our Isle,
 Nae bard ava,
 Frae pauky Coila wons a smile
 Since Robin gaed awa.

His hamcly style let Fashion spurn ;
 She wants baith taste and skill ;
 And wiser should she ever turn,
 She'll sing his sangs hersel'.

For nae sang sic pathos speaks,
 Nae sang ava ;
 And Fashion's foreign rants and squeaks
 Should a' be drumm'd awa.

Her far-fetch'd figures aye maun fail
 To touch the feeling heart,
 Simplicity's direct appeal
 Excels sic learned art.

And nae modern minstrel's lay,
 Nae lay ava,
 Sae powerfully the heart can sway
 As Robin's that's awa.

For o'er his numbers Coila's muse
 A magic influence breathed,
 And round her darling poets brows
 A peerless crown had wreath'd.

JAMES STIRRAT.

And nae wreath that e'er was seen,
 Nae wreath ava,
 Will bloom sae lang's the holly green
 O' Robin that's awa.

Let Erin's minstrel, Tommy Moore,
 His lyrics sweetly sing ;
 'Twould lend his harp a higher power
 Would Coila add a string.

For nae harp has yet been kent,
 Nae harp ava,
 To match the harp that Coila lent
 To Robin that's awa.

And though our shepherd, Jamie Hogg,
 His pipe fu' sweetly plays,
 It ne'er will charm auld Scotland's lug
 Like Ploughman Robin's lays.

For nae pipe will Jamie tune,
 Nae pipe ava,
 Like that which breath'd by ' Bonnie Doon,'
 Ere Robin gaed awa.

Even Scotland's pride, Sir Walter Scott,
 Who boldly strikes the lyre,
 Maun yield to Robin's sweet love-note
 His native wit and fire.

For nae bard hath ever sung,
 Nae bard ava,
 In hamely or in foreign tongue,
 Like Robin that's awa.

Frae feeling heart Tom Campbell's lays
 In classic beauty flow,
 But Robin's artless sang displays
 The soul's impassion'd glow.

For nae bard by classic lore,
 Nae bard ava,
 Has thrill'd the bosom's inmost core
 Like Robin that's awa.

A powerfu' harp did Byron sweep,
 But not wi' happy glee ;
 And though his tones were strong and deep,
 He ne'er could change the key.

For nae bard beneath the lift,
 Nae bard ava,
 Wi' master skill the keys could shift,
 Like Robin that's awa.

He needs nae monumental stanes
 To keep alive his fame ;
 Auld Granny Scotland and her weans
 Will ever sing his name.

For nae name does Fame record,
 Nae name ava,
 By Caledonia mair adored,
 Than Robin's that's awa."

We are satisfied that our readers must agree with us in thinking that the taste and discrimination exhibited in these verses are creditable to the author, and justify our wish that he would no longer deprive himself of the applause of his countrymen.

We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of extracting from the volume before noticed, the following song, which, we understand, the late Mr R. A. Smith set to music, though the composition has unfortunately been lost :—

“ ‘ In life's gay morn,' when hopes beat high,
 And youthfu' love's endearing tie
 Gave rapture to the nuptial sigh
 Within the arms o' Mary,
 My ain dear Mary ;
 Nae joys beneath the vaulted sky
 Could equal mine wi' Mary.

The sacred hours like moments flew,
 Soft transports thrill'd my bosom through ;
 The warl' evanish'd frae my view
 Within the arms o' Mary,
 My ain dear Mary ;
 Nae gloomy cares my soul o'er knew,
 Within the arms o' Mary.

Young fancy spread her visions gay ;
 Love fondly view'd the fair display ;
 Hope show'd the blissfu' nuptial day,
 And I was rapt wi' Mary,
 My ain dear Mary ;
 The flowers o' Eden strew'd the way
 That led me to my Mary.

But life is now a dreary waste ;
 I lanely wander, sair depress'd ;
 For cold and lifless is that breast
 Where throbb'd the heart o' Mary,
 My ain dear Mary ;
 She's gane to seats o' blissfu' rest,
 And I ha'e lost my Mary."

The following verses are taken at random from the author's collection :—

" YORICK IN A FIT OF DESPONDENCY.

' Oh wretch ! she cried, that, like some troubled ghost,
 Art doom'd to wander through this world of woe,
 While memory speaks of joys for ever lost—
 Of peace, of comfort, thou hast ceased to know.'—PRATT.

Poor Yorick, stung with deep regret,
 Pours forth the bosom-rending sigh,
 And, brooding o'er his hapless fate,
 His inmost wishes are *to die*.

He deems this life a weary wild,
 And all a blank beneath the sky ;
 He views himself as misery's child,
 Born with the growing wish *to die*.

Where Pleasure tempts to pull its rose,
 The thorns of Care in ambush lie,
 Which pierce his soul with keenest wocs,
 And wako the painful wish *to die*.

On life's sea launch'd in adverse gale,
 His reck'ning lost, no haven nigh,
 He cheerless tosses, crazed and frail,
 O'erburden'd with the wish *to die*.

He sees his friends a course pursuc,
 Where bliss, in prospect, cheers the eye ;
 While he to leeward struggles through,
 Cursed with the dreary wish *to die*.

When dark'ning storms their rage extend,
 And billows of distress run high,
 He feels it idle to contend,
 And breathes the fervent wish *to die*.

Yet ne'er his name with coward stain,
 Though from his woes he longs to fly ;
 When doom'd by Fate to live in vain,
 There's bravery in the wish *to die*."

JOHN RAMSAY,

AUTHOR OF "DUNDONALD CASTLE," &c.

JOHN RAMSAY was born in Kilmarnock in the year 1802. His education, like that of most individuals in his sphere of life, was limited. After leaving the jurisdiction of the "dominie," he resided for several years with an uncle, near the village of Dundonald. The ancient castle, and the romantic scenery in the neighbourhood, linked as they are with the stirring events of Scottish history, had no doubt an inspiring effect on the ardent mind of Ramsay. Hence it is that we often find him reverting, in his poems, to the enchanting spot, with all the buoyancy of youthful enthusiasm.

He was afterwards apprenticed, in his native place, as a carpet-weaver; and, amidst the din and dissonance of the loom-shop, he occasionally essayed, in fancy's dream, to visit the Poet's bower. A subscription paper for a ball was at one time handed through the carpet-work, bearing these lines—

" Every good fellow who wishes to prance,
Come, pray take the pencil and sign for a dance"—

and which, as a matter of course, was submitted to Ramsay, who wrote the following *impromptu* on the back of it:—

" Old Plato once met Father Jove,
And ask'd the Self-existent,
' What was in earth, or heaven above,
Of all most inconsistent ?'
Jove heard the question, gave a nod—
To heav'n's high tow'rs advancing,
Unveil'd this world—' Now,' says the god,
' D'ye see yon weavers dancing ?'"

The satire, though it galled the more earnest promoters of the ball, was much appreciated; and Ramsay was induced to send the lines for insertion to the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, a

clever periodical, edited by Henry Glassford Bell, Esq. The lines, trifling as they may appear, were inserted in an early number. Emboldened by encouragement, Mr Ramsay contributed another poem to the Journal, entitled "Lines to Eliza," which was also received, and highly recommended by the indulgent editor:—

" There comes an hour, Eliza, when we must
 Bid all farewell, and sink into the dust ;
 There comes a sun that shall behold us laid
 Beneath the turf, forgotten and decay'd ;
 There comes a morning, at whose vernal voice
 Earth shall revive, and Nature shall rejoice,
 But see us sleeping in the dewy sod,
 And all unconscious as the kindred clod.
 There comes a day, diffusing life and light,
 With all that summer gives of warm and bright ;
 And as away its beams of sunshine pass,
 They'll shade us deeper in the long green grass.
 There comes a day, when autumn shall descend,
 Dispensing blessings with an open hand ;
 And o'er these fertile vales youths yet unborn
 Shall wield the sickle in the waving corn ;
 Join in the jests and simple pranks that goad
 The hours along, and lighten labour's load.
 And when the dews of ev'ning deck the blade,
 And the lone redbreast tops the mellow shade,
 In love's embrace they'll hail the twilight scene,
 Even in retreats where thou and I have been ;
 While we, to love and all things else unknown,
 Mix our cold dust with generations gone.
 There comes a day, whose dull and dreary close
 Shall see the world a cheerless waste of snows,
 Whose farewell beam and setting crimson streak,
 Purpling yon mountain's far-ascending peak,
 Shall view the mantle of grim winter spread,
 Ev'n o'er the stones that mark our narrow bed ;
 But these will pass, and ages will roll on,
 And we remain unconscious they have flown.
 There comes a day, when dark shall grow the sky,
 The sun, in mid-course, close his dying eye—
 The sea stand still, deep-smitten with dismay,
 And every isle and mountain flee away—
 The heav'ns vanish with an awful roll,
 And the last trumpet sound from pole to pole :—
 Then shall our mortal put the immortal on,
 And meet Eternal Justice on his throne."

When the late Marquis of Hastings visited Loudoun Castle in 1823, after his return from India, the Kilmarnock Volunteers and the Ayrshire Yeomanry repaired thither to congratulate him on his arrival. The excitement created in Kilmarnock by the turn-out of the volunteers was considerable, and formed the engrossing subject of conversation for several weeks. Ramsay, whose *forte* certainly lies more in the satirical than the pathetic, selected "the march" of the volunteers as a legitimate subject for his pen, and wrote an amusing poem, in which he did ample justice to some of the more eccentric characters in the "dandy corps." The poem, though only in manuscript, was widely known throughout "auld Killie," at that time ringing with

" the great campaign,
Which the brave Dandies did sustain."

Mr Ramsay continued to work at the carpets for a number of years; but he is now, and has been for a length of time, in business as a grocer in Kilmarnock. He is married and has a rising family.

In 1836, after a sufficient number of subscribers had been obtained, he published the first edition of his poems, of which a thousand copies were printed. In 1839, he was induced to publish a second edition, with emendations and improvements; and now, we understand, a third edition of a thousand copies is in the press. The volume was favourably noticed in Chambers's Journal, and several local and other provincial newspapers.

"The Eglinton Park Meeting," the leading poem in the second edition, is among the latest of his writings; and, if we may judge from the strong poetical vein pervading it, his genius appears only to require cultivation to undertake a more daring flight. Written in the strain of Tennant's "Anster Fair," "The Eglinton Park Meeting" is a running commentary on every thing that came within the author's observation, and is a poem of undoubted merit. The following stanzas will serve as a specimen. Having reached Bogside course, the author describes the scene:—

" But here first, Nature, thou my goddess bright,
Shall my song rise in all its power to thee—

What transports of ineffable delight
 Thy charms have given me even in infancy !
 Thy dewy wild-flowers, dawn, and dying light
 Of day, far o'er the wide illumined sea—
 Thy hoary hills, gray rocks, and woodlands wild,
 Where parents often deem'd were lost their child.

Behold the sandy plain here tells a tale
 Of earth's mutations, to the thinking mind,
 In words of thunder ; westward the wide vale
 Of mighty waters, rising to the wind,
 And glitt'ring in the sun, where the full sail
 Of Industry or Pleasure still we find,
 August Bengoil ! * where evening billows meet,
 And wash with songs the giant monarch's feet.

O, ho ! my little sentimental blue,
 Ye're at your woods, your hills, and streams again ;
 I'd thank you more to turn and take a view
 Of titled Beauty, through the chariot pane.
 The world's wide continents their tributes due
 Have given to her shrine, and all in vain
 We seek for sim'lies to describe the fair,
 For Nature's highest, brightest work is there :

And many a youth of fair and manly die,
 On charger of our isle's unrivall'd breed,
 Swift as the simooms of the desert fly,
 Pricks o'er the plain the snorting fiery steed.
 What splendid equipages glitter by,
 With sober, stately pace, or graceful speed ;—
 Homer ! all chariots in thy Trojan scenes,
 Were mere wheelbarrows unto our machines.

* * * *

Well, what's next seen ? The farmers, old and young,
 Upon their blacks, and browns, and lumb'ring grays.

* * * *

Here squeezes Jack his quid as in a vice,
 And sea-born phrases deals, and oaths wholesale ;
 And there are men of garters, thimbles, dice,
 While others nuts and gingerbread retail :
 Another class, quite of the touch as nice
 As fairy's fingers, those who seldom fail
 To catch the purse—why, there's no ' harum ' in't,
 They're only Dan's disciples taking—' rint.'

* Goatfield, the highest mountain in Arran.

* * * *

Well, I do think, and almost too could swear,
 They're here from ev'ry land beneath the sun,
 And moon, and stars, and clouds—from each nook where
 The wind has blown, grass sprung, or water run ;
 Where'er mankind have felt the thorns of care,
 Or loved, or hated, or have seen that old 'un
 Called Death, although I miss the Ashantees,
 And Cook's old cronics of the Southern Seas.

* * * *

But to the tents away now we must hie—
 Far up's the sun, and soon the race will start—
 And all things look more brilliant to the eye,
 When folks have something got to keep the heart.
 To paint this panorama grand when I
 Attempt, as vain, as futile is my art,
 As 'twould be catching Garnock * in a riddle,
 Or playing on the tongs 'gainst Paganini's fiddle.

With jostling, squeezing, driving, and what not,
 We reach'd those foci of the mirth and tipple,
 And took our seats among a merry lot,
 Driving the fun, and taking their bit sipple.
 O, Bacchus ! spite of all that has been wrote,
 And said, and sung, we drain thy deadly nipple,
 And yield oft, part by part, till sinks the whole—
 Unnerved the system, and unmann'd the soul.

And, O ye gods ! of farces, this was king—
 Such tearing, swearing, gormandizing, drinking ;
 Such courting, jesting, laughing, every thing
 But common sense, sobriety, and thinking.
 Solids in mountains fled as on the wing,
 And fast as rain in sunburnt pastures sinking
 Whole seas of liquids—meat and drink looks really
 To run a race—their winning-post the belly."

In the " Address to Dundonald Castle," he is no less felicitous in the selection of material than judicious in its arrangement.

* Garnock, a small river in the district of Cuninghame, Ayrshire, which rises from the foot of a very high hill in the moor called the Mistylaw, on the northern boundary of the county, parish of Largs, and runs shallow, clear, and beautiful, down the hill towards the south ; it holds on its course through the parishes of Dalry and Kilwinning, enlarged as it flows by the addition of the Caaf and the Rye, till it falls into the sea at the harbour of Irvine.—*Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland.*

The ancient ruin, once the seat of Scottish royalty, is revered by the Poet with an ardour, and described with a vigour, that touches and awakens the tender susceptibilities of the heart. We do not envy the man, who, after visiting the sylvan shades and shaggy hills of Dundonald, does not recognise, in the glowing imagery of the Poet, the reality and boldness of its representation :—

“ O, ancient pile ! fast hast’ning to decay,
 Around thy ruins, musing as I stray,
 How many mingling feelings do I find
 Pervade my breast and burst upon my mind ?
 Long hast thou stood beneath the stroke of time,
 And all the rigours of a northern clime—
 The summer’s sultry blaze—the winter’s blast,
 Tremendous hurling from the dark north-west—
 And many generations hast thou seen
 Swept from the earth, as if they ne’er had been ;
 To the lone land of dim oblivion hurl’d,
 Where clouds of ages veil the midnight world.

* * * *

Till fades the eye,
 Unnumber’d beauties ranged in order lie ;
 The busy town, where smoke-pent crowds respire—
 The solemn church—the cloud-encircled spire—
 The splendid villa, and the lofty dome—
 Wealth’s safe retreat, and pleasure’s softest home—
 The verdant lawn, where green woods intervene—
 The twinkling rill—the lonely cot serene—
 All, all combined, beam full upon the sight,
 One heav’nly picture of refulgent light.”

We will conclude our hasty sketch with another short extract :—

“ ON SEEING A REDBREAST SHOT.

All ruddy glow’d the dark’ning west,
 In azure were the mountains drest,
 Her veil of mist had ev’ning cast
 O’er all the plain,
 And slowly home the reapers pass’d,
 A weary train.

On old Dundonald’s hills I lay,
 And watch’d the landscape fade away ;

The owl come from the turret gray
 And skimm'd the dell,
 While leaves from Autumn's sapless spray
 Down rustling fell.

And on a thorn, that widely spread
 Its moss-grown, lowly-bending head,
 Where long the winter storm had shed
 Its baneful power,
 And oft returning summer clad
 In leaf and flower—

A redbreast sang of sunshine gone,
 And dreary winter coming on ;
 What though his strains had never known
 The rules of art ?
 They woke to notes of sweetest tone,
 The trembling heart ;

Bade days return for ever fled,
 And hopes long laid among the dead,
 And forms in fairy colours clad,
 Confused appear ;
 While melting Feeling kindly shed
 Her warmest tear.

When, lo ! a flash, a thund'ring knell,
 That startled Echo in her cell,
 Dissolved the sweet, the pleasing spell,
 And hush'd the song ;
 The little warbler lifeless fell
 The leaves among.

Thus the young bard, in some retreat
 Remote from learning's lofty seat,
 The critic prowling haps to meet,
 And strikes the blow,
 That lays him, with his prospects sweet,
 For ever low."

JOHN GILMOUR,

AUTHOR OF "HARVEST HOME," "SABBATH SACRAMENT," &c.

JOHN GILMOUR, who may be regarded as the Henry Kirk White or Michael Bruce of Ayrshire, was born at Clerkland, in the parish of Stewarton, on the 25th February 1810, and died there on the 14th April 1828. His father, James Gilmour, who still survives, is one of the heritors of the parish, and is proprietor and occupant of the farm on which our author was born. From his earliest years, the youthful Poet was distinguished by a sedate and studious demeanour, generally preferring the society of the old to the young, and delighting much more in listening to reminiscences of times gone by than in the boyish amusements of his juvenile compeers. With a view to the pulpit, he pursued those studies at the parish school necessary to qualify him for entering on his career at College. At thirteen years of age he matriculated at the University of Glasgow, where he attended the classes during three consecutive sessions with eminent success. In the course of that time he carried no less than eight prizes—a fact sufficiently indicative of his talent and application. He had commenced his fourth session when ill health compelled him to return to his father's house, where he soon after died of consumption.

A small volume of his poems, entitled "The Poetical Remains of John Gilmour," was published at Paisley towards the close of 1828, to which is prefixed a short memoir of the author, written by one of his fellow-students. The pieces were selected from his MSS., without much care, by a friend who undertook the superintendence of the publication, as a tribute to the memory of one whose genius and personal worth he had long known and admired.

In glancing over the pages of "The Poetical Remains," the reader must be hypercritical indeed who does not feel amply satisfied that the author must have been all that his friends represent

him. Viewed as the production of a youth at College, who died at the green age of eighteen, it is impossible to withhold the meed of praise which they claim, or to help regretting that one so gifted and full of promise should have been so prematurely cut down.

Remarkable for his love of home and the scenes of his earlier youth, no place in the world appeared half so enchanting to our Poet as the locality of his birth. The bustling thoroughfares and ever-varying attractions of a crowded city like Glasgow, which so many prize, had no charms for him; they served only to draw more closely the ties by which he was bound to the rural haunts of his childhood: *—

“ There is a music in my native stream
I never heard in any other one—
My native fields are fair, and fairer seem
Than any other fields beneath the sun.”

The close of the session was always hailed with peculiar delight; when, abandoning the *toga*, and bidding adieu to the smoky atmosphere of the College, he hied away with a bounding spirit to that happy home, where the kind welcome of friends and a mother's blindest smile ever awaited him:—

“ There is a magic in the name of mother
That lends the dearest, strongest charm to home!” †

The domestic affections, love of country, and all the finer feelings of a sensitive and virtuous mind, pervade nearly every page of the little volume before us. His highest aim was to celebrate

* Extract from a letter on his return from the country, 17th October 1826:—
“ How different are the sounds I now hear in this crowded city, from the enchanting melodies of a morning at my country home! Where is the sound of the wild brook babbling down the distant hill, and the shrill carols of the early lark? Where are they? where nature and simplicity reign in the rural retreat. Here, instead, usurping art sets the bustling sons of commerce agog; and the love of gain hath banished the native simplicity of the human breast, and sent it to flourish free on the mountains, where nature receives it with open arms and a smiling countenance.”

† Our young Poet had an unbounded affection for his mother. She was his “ first and latest nurse”—his nearest and dearest friend. She suffered severely by his death, and has herself since that event paid the debt of nature.

the well-known haunts of his infancy, where, in later times, he had often wandered in happy solitude during the summer recess—

“ Oh ! how I love thee, lovely village,* where
 Its ‘ bonnet ’ manufacture boasts to rise ;
 For winding Annock, tuneless streamlet, there
 Received me oft o’er head and ears and eyes—
 Ay, there I loved to lave my boyish frame,
 When moments pass’d unheeded as they came !

 Unsung, alas ! though Annock’s waters flow,
 Flow thou with them, my unpretending strain ;
 Else may my bosom never, *never* know
 The raptures of celestial song again !
 For there in boyhood’s first unconscious glow,
 My lot was cast among the madcap train ;
 But, certes, far the meanest slave, I ween,
 To carol in rude lays my native scene.”

Young Gilmour, in the words of the memoir prefixed to his poems, “ was accustomed to devote a considerable portion of his time either to reading or writing beneath the shade of a lofty lime, which grows in the vicinity of his father’s house : thither he was wont to repair in those happier hours when genius is most prolific, and, reclining on a rustic seat, commit to some loose piece of paper the effusions of the moment. His attachment to the objects of external nature, was a feeling which on all occasions was strongly developed, and clung to his soul even till the latest hour of his existence. On the day previous to his decease, when the shadows of death seemed hovering round his pale brow, he desired the curtain of the window to be thrown aside, that he might once more look on the green fields, the blue sky, and the sweet songsters of the grove, who were chanting their welcome to spring.”

Severe study is believed to have accelerated, if not induced, the insidious disease to which he fell a victim. In giving his poetical humour the rein, he too frequently encroached on those hours which ought to have been devoted to other duties. Great exertion and late sitting were in consequence often necessary to

* Stewarton.

overtake the preparation of his College essays. Well aware of this propensity to procrastinate, he thus writes of himself:—

“ Deep tinged with all the foibles of the student,
The veriest victim of unbridled whim,
His studies were unsettled and imprudent,
Nor hinged on method, nor upheld by scheme ;
And many a long prescribed and tedious theme
Had moments of the latest hour to borrow ;
And oh ! how rare, how grievous to redeem
The debt that’s guaranteed by false to-morrow :
This Markwell knew full well, and knew it to his sorrow.”

The two principal poems in “ The Remains,” are “ The Harvest Home” and “ The Sabbath Sacrament,” in both of which the author displays considerable imagination and no common descriptive powers. The following is a glowing picture of an autumnal evening :—

“ Save yonder half-apparent globe of fire
That sinks in red but rayless majesty ;
Whom, lo ! the tenderest gazer may admire,
No longer dazzled now ; and save where he
Hath fringed the east where day’s last streaks expire,
And where the west with crimson tapestry,
Like a wide ocean of vermilion,
Borrows her splendour from the setting sun !

The airy warblers from their tuneful throats,
Or high in air, or perch’d on bush and spray,
Pour’d forth so soothing so bewitching notes—
Their last thank-offering to the god of day !
So soft, so languishing the music floats
Upon the greedy ear and dies away,
When thou, affection’s hapless partner, hearest
Thy love’s last accents sigh’d—the last and dearest.

I could have wish’d such choristers to stay
And bid his silver waning sister hail ;
But such regret soon melted with the lay
Of twilight’s melancholy nightingale ;
And drowsy beetles humming in the gray
And dusky darkling shadows of the vale,
In consort with the dark-brown leaves that wave
And rustle round their hollow winter’s grave ;

And mingling mellow with the balmy drops
 That heaven almost unperceived distils,
 A distant bleat, re-echoed from the tops
 Of yonder gray and gloomy mantling hills,
 Like the first dawning of romantic hopes,
 Through every fibre of my bosom thrills,
 And swells the soul to throbbing ecstasy,
 The nurse of warmth, and love, and poetry !”

The contrast between the days of persecution and the present is well depicted in the “ Sabbath Sacrament :”—

“ The moors and mountains were their dwelling-place—
 The mountain’s side their temple and their grave—
 Marvel not then, they were a rigid race,
 Untaught to war, but turbulent and brave ;—
 Such are the warriors sufferers should have,
 Who live in hope that’s only not despair—
 Such are the heroes who alone can save
 A sinking cause—let tyranny beware
 How she may rouse these slumbering lions from their lair !

On the hill’s side the worshippers convened,
 Though not as now they meet, but on the Word,
 Perchance, with one reclining arm they lean’d,
 And with the other grasp’d the ready sword—
 As did of old the servants of the Lord,
 When they the ruin’d Jewish fane rebuilt,
 Building the while with ready weapons stored ;
 For heedless how or where their blows they dealt,
 Their foes pursued them there, and there much blood was spilt.

Hark ! heard ye not the minstrelsy of war,
 The shout, the drum, the clarion, and the shrill
 And shrieking mountain-pipes mingling afar
 With the sweet sacred music of the hill—
 Sounds that might well awake wild terror’s thrill
 In other breasts—in theirs it kindles fire !
 ‘ O God ! ’ they cry, ‘ protect the remnant still ! ’
 And then succeeds a scene of tumult dire—
 A scene that suits but ill with my peace-loving lyre !

But how serene ! how peaceful ! how serene !
 Yon group of village worshippers appear :
 Like the hush’d ocean where a storm hath been,
 To make the calm succeeding doubly dear,

When all is lull'd, save the unceasing stir
 Of waves scarce heaving, breaking, bubbling on,
 And the light carol of some mariner
 Whose fickle hopes had fled and come anon—
 Such is the churchyard scene the sun now smiles upon.

Here high and low are gather'd, small and great—
 The peasants, rich and poor, and old and young :
 To some the green grass turfs afford a seat ;
 And some are stretch'd full lazily along ;
 And some stand all erect amid the throng—
 For show, perhaps, they stand—ah ! think not so ;
 And some on forms or chairs ; and some among,
 Or on the tombstones gray, in many a row,
 Where some—nay all, perchance—have kindred lying low.”

Amongst the smaller pieces, there are several of undoubted merit ; and we might go on multiplying our quotations without the risk of weariness, but our limits remind us that we must be brief. The following “ Ode,” couched in a lively strain, portrays the author's strong affection for the Muses. He had been frequently lectured by his friends on the impropriety of indulging his verse-making propensities, and often resolved to hang his harp on the willows for ever ; but he as frequently found it impossible to “ forego the raptures of the lyre :”—

“ ODE TO THE LADIES AND THE MUSES—1827.

Though India offer'd all her treasures,
 And Europe trembled at his nod ;
 Though kings were panders to his pleasures
 And humbly kiss'd his ruling rod ;
 Could he that's touch'd with sacred fire,
 Forego the raptures of the lyre ?

No ! sooner shall the mother tear
 The smiling infant from her breast,
 And wish the stream were poison, where
 Its cherub lips in love were prest :
 And sooner shall the maid of truth
 Forget the passion of her youth.

How sweet to steal an hour from care,
 And bid our fancy wander o'er

The magic scenes of childhood, where
 Our steps, alas! shall stray no more!
 How doubly sweet, if these inspire
 The first wild warbles of the lyre.

How dread! to cast our eyes before
 And view the quicksands to be past
 Ere we can reach yon peaceful shore,
 And, lo! the tempest's gathering fast.
 But song provides a powerful charm,
 And shines like moonlight, in the storm.

O give me then a willing muse—
 The early idol of my heart!
 Nor O, my gentle stars! refuse
 The transports woman can impart—
 The mutual wish—the mutual glow
 Is all of heaven on earth we know.

Then give me but a willing muse
 With her who only shares my heart,
 And fortune, if you please, refuse
 The trappings splendour can impart—
 A Competence and Conscience clear
 Require no thousand pounds a-year."

The personal appearance of our youthful author was highly prepossessing. He was rather above the middle stature, with a Roman contour of countenance; and, though much of his time had been spent in retirement, he exhibited a degree of native ease and grace in his deportment, which admirably qualified him to figure in society. He was an accurate scholar; and had an elocution in his recitation that promised well for his success in the pulpit.

A P P E N D I X.





JOHN GOLDIE

Edinburgh Hugh Paton, Her. Majestys Carver & Gilder: 1840.

A P P E N D I X .

JOHN GOLDIE,

AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, MORAL AND DIVINE," &c.

JOHN GOLDIE, or GOUDIE, to whom Burns addressed the well-known lines, beginning

" Oh Goudie ! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black-coats and rev'rend wigs"—

was a man of a strongly marked character and vigorous intellect. Few men, in his day, possessed a greater share of local notoriety ; and, considering the enduring celebrity which the Epistle of the Poet has conferred upon him, it is somewhat extraordinary that none of the commentators of Burns have hitherto favoured the world with a single line of his history. This is the more surprising, that he was the early, in fact, it may be said, the very first patron of the Ayrshire Ploughman ; while to others is awarded that credit due in an especial manner to the subject of our notice.

Goldie was born in 1717, at Craigmill, situated on the Water of Cessnock, in the parish of Galston, where his forefathers, who followed the occupation of millers, had occupied the premises nearly four hundred years. His education was exceedingly limited. Never having been at any school, the elements of education were taught him by his mother, and he acquired the art of writing himself ; but he early displayed an uncommon taste for mechanics. Before he attained his fifteenth year, he had completed a miniature mill with the humblest implements ; and so perfect was the machine, that, on being set to work, it was capable of grinding a boll of pease in the day. This effort of his boyish ingenuity gained him much credit in the neighbourhood. Amongst other visiters, the father of the present Mr Wallace of Kelly, who lived at Cessnock House, brought the then Earl of Marchmont to Craigmill to gratify his curiosity by a sight of Goldie's handicraft. So well pleased was the Earl, that he gave the youth *five* shillings (a great sum in those days) to purchase an iron spindle for the wheel, in place of the wooden one upon which it revolved.

As illustrative of his predilection for architecture, it is told that he once travelled all the way to Glasgow on foot to purchase a small book on the subject, which cost him two shillings ; and returning the same evening, a distance altogether of nearly forty

miles, he never closed his eyes in sleep until he had made himself fully master of its contents. After spending several years at Craigmill, he became tired of a country life; his taste and abilities alike urging him to a more active sphere of occupation. Having attained considerable expertness in the use of edged tools, he determined on commencing business in Kilmarnock as a cabinet-maker, although he had never received the slightest instruction in the business. He was successful, however, beyond his most sanguine expectations, and greatly excelled in the ingenuity of his productions. On one occasion, he manufactured a beautiful mahogany clock-case, on which were carved by his own hand, with the most scrupulous correctness, the whole five orders of architecture. It was too costly for the locality of Kilmarnock; and he failed in finding a customer for it, until the fame of the article reached the ears of the then Duke of Hamilton, who purchased it for thirty pounds, and placed it in Hamilton Palace, where it still remains.

Having realized a sufficient capital, and finding, probably from a change in his mental pursuits—for the mind of Mr Goldie was ever active—that the business of a cabinet-maker was rather laborious, he purchased a property at the Cross, in the lower premises of which he opened an extensive wine and spirit establishment, and for many years carried on a thriving and profitable trade.

It was said of Lord Newton that cards were his study and the law his amusement. So it may be averred of Goldie—books and the sciences engaging a much greater share of his attention than business. He read with avidity, and he was daily instructing himself in some of those abstruse branches of knowledge which are usually to be attained only by long academical instruction. In this way he became master of Euclid, and made considerable progress in astronomy. In the course of his mathematical studies, he hit on a process of mental calculation by which he could solve the most difficult arithmetical problem with the greatest facility, and in an amazingly short space of time. A gentleman of his acquaintance, when in Edinburgh on one occasion, entered into a wager with a celebrated arithmetician of the metropolis for a rump and dozen, that he would produce a person in the west of Scotland who could surpass him in calculation. To gratify his friend, Goldie proceeded to Edinburgh; and the question having been given, the arithmetician set eagerly to work with slate and pencil, while Goldie, merely leaning his head for a few moments on his staff, gave a correct answer ere his opponent had well begun.

Goldie had been brought up in sound Calvinistic principles, his parents being strict Antiburghers; and he used to tell, in after life, with what devotion he used to travel from Craigmill to Kilmaurs every Sabbath, to hear the gospel expounded by the then minister, the Rev. Mr Smeaton. In the course of his reading, however, a decided change took place in his religious opinions; and much acrimony having arisen on the subject of Arminianism, in 1764, when the Rev. Mr Lindsay, who was supposed to have a leaning that way, was forcibly intruded into the Laigh Kirk of Kilmarnock; and afterwards by the disputes between the New and Old Light parties, the active temperament of Goldie at once led him into the midst of the controversy. But he went much farther than Arminianism, and may be said to have only stopped short at Deism. He believed firmly in the existence of a God, but repudiated almost every other fundamental tenet of orthodox belief. The first of his series of publications, popularly termed “Goudie’s Bible,” and which are now extremely scarce, appeared about 1780, in three octavo volumes, printed at Glasgow. It was entitled “Essays on various Important Subjects,

Moral and Divine ; being an Attempt to distinguish *True* from *False* Religion." We have only seen the first volume of this work, the title-page of which is partly destroyed. The arguments of the author, while he denies the inspiration of certain portions of the Scriptures, seem to be chiefly directed against the doctrine of original sin. The Essays, as a literary production, display considerable reasoning powers, but are prolix and inelegant, such as might be expected from the pen of one who had not been schooled in the art of composition. A second edition appeared in 1785, with a London imprint, but emanating, we rather think, from the local press of John Wilson. This edition was entitled "Essays on various Subjects, Moral and Divine, in one volume, by John Goldie ; to which is added, the Gospel Recovered from a Captive State, in five volumes. By a Gentle Christian."

The name of Goldie became notorious in consequence of his writings ; and though his "Bible," as the Essays were called, was carefully excluded from the libraries of the orthodox, his opinions were no secret to the community. Yet the sterling honesty of his character, and the morality exhibited in his private conduct, secured for him the friendship of a wide circle of acquaintances. He was on intimate terms with most of the clergy of the district, and had often contended with them on points of faith. The Rev. Mr Russell of the High Church had one Sabbath been more than usually severe in his denouncement of the enemy of mankind. Happening to meet the reverend gentleman next day, Mr Goldie thus addressed him :—"I understand you have been very abusive of one of your best friends of late." "Why—how ? who says I have abused my friends ?" said Russell, with characteristic sternness. "Ah !" replied Goldie, "had it no been for the Devil, you eliels in black gowns and white bands wad na hae had sae muckle *chaunner* !"

So widely known, it would have been indeed surprising had the author of the much-reprobated Essays escaped the attention of Burns, who was then, it may be said, only beginning to form his estimate of society and its institutions. Goldie was exceedingly accessible ; and the Poet had seen him more than once at his house in Kilmarnock. One day, the author of the Essays had occasion to be in the neighbourhood of Mosgiel : he called in passing ; and in the course of his stay, Burns and he sallied out to the fields, where, sitting down behind a stook of corn—for it was the reaping season—the Poet read over one or two of his manuscript poems. Goldie was highly delighted with the pieces, expressing his astonishment that he did not think of printing them. Burns at once unbosomed his circumstances—he was on the eve of setting out for the West Indies, and Wilson (of Kilmarnock) would not run the hazard of publication. "Weel, Robin," said Goldie, "I'll tell you what to do. Come your wa's down to Killie some day next week, and tak' pat-luck wi' me. I ha'e twa or three guid frien's that'll be able to set the press a-going." Burns was of course true to his appointment ; and after dinner they were joined in a bowl or two of toddy by the friends whom his entertainer had purposely invited. Amongst these were the Town-clerk, Mr Paterson of Braehead ; Dr Hamilton, Kilmarnock Place ; Major Parker of Assloss, then banker in Kilmarnock ; Dr William Moore ; Mr Robert Muir, wine-merchant, &c. In the course of the evening, Burns read several of his pieces ; and so delighted were the company, that they at once became security to Wilson for the printing of his work. Thus was Goldie the immediate means of bringing the Bard into notice. During the printing of his volume, Burns was almost a daily visiter at Goldie's house, where he corrected the most of the proof-sheets, and wrote not a few of his letters. At this

period the Poet was rather abstemious in his habits, and his dress was composed of "hodden gray," then the universal garb of the agricultural population. Lieutenant Goldie, R.N., (son of our author,) was a mere youth at the time; but he perfectly recollects the person and demeanour of Burns. When the Bard returned from Edinburgh, however, he had undergone a vast improvement. The hodden grays were doffed for a fine light-gray single-breasted coat, striped vest, breeches, and topped boots. Much has been said of the easy self-possession displayed by Burns in his intercourse with society to which he had never been accustomed. His biographers have probably drawn an exaggerated picture in this respect. Lieutenant Goldie is induced to think, that his manner in the company of those whom he might consider his superiors in station, was reserved and bashful—pretty much like what might be expected from most individuals in his sphere of life. The sojourn of the Poet in Edinburgh, and the continued whirl of company in which he was involved, would no doubt effect a decided improvement in his address.

Goldie latterly became engaged in coal speculations, by which his circumstances were much impaired. In these he was at first successful; but being in advanced years, he unfortunately connected himself in partnership with an individual who did not act fairly by him. Strictly honourable himself, he was confiding enough to believe that every one else possessed the same integrity of principle. Amidst old age and difficulties, however, the mind of Goldie continued vigorous and active. His interest in the coal trade, and the growing intercourse of the town of Kilmarnock with the port of Troon, led him to contemplate the propriety of constructing a canal between the two localities. The project was so highly thought of at the time, that he made a survey of the line; but the expense was an insuperable barrier to the undertaking. The railway, erected chiefly by the capital of the Duke of Portland, was not begun till a considerable number of years afterwards; and many still think that a canal would have been of much greater advantage to Kilmarnock.

The last published work by Mr Goldie was printed at the Kilmarnock press in 1808, by H. and S. Crawford. It formed a single volume, and was entitled "Conclusive Evidences against Atheism; in vindication of a First Cause. In Two Parts. Part 2d. A Reconciliation of a supposed Incongruity in the Attributes of Deity." At the end of this book, a prospectus was given of another work on which he had been engaged, viz.—"A Revise, or a Reform of the Present System of Astronomy, in three volumes." The nature of the proposed reform was never thoroughly understood, as the author, then far advanced in life, did not live to carry the publication into effect. He was known, however, to be a disciple of Des Cartes, whose system, though confessedly a work of genius, has been so often reformed as to be nearly, if not entirely, exploded. He must have been for many years engaged in arranging material for his projected improvement on the Cartesian system of astronomical philosophy; and the calculations which the study involved, led him into the most thoughtful and abstracted moods. In his walks he frequently passed his immediate friends and relatives without observing them. Though he obtained probably as little credit for his astronomical opinions as he did for his religious views, Mr Goldie was generally regarded as a man of superior talent, and was usually honoured by the title of "philosopher." The local poets, following in the wake of Burns, seemed to vie with each other in penning addresses to him. Sillar composed complimentary verses in honour of him; and Turnbull wrote the following elegiac and somewhat satiric stanzas:—

" ELEGY ON A FAMOUS PHILOSOPHER.

Nae mair I'll greet and mak' a main
 For chiefs that's neither dead nor gane,
 But wail, in doolfu' dumps, for ane
 Of wondrous meed ;
 For Death a' worthy wight has tane,
 J . . . G . . . 's dead ! . . .

Ye tyrant power, ye dinna care,
 The man o' parts and knowledge rare,
 Ye'll nane for a' their wisdom spare,
 Without remeed,
 The vera heart and saul o' lair,
 J . . . G . . . 's dead !

I trow ye little kent his merit,
 What wondrous gifts he did inherit ;
 He had a clear, enlight'ning spirit,
 A shining glead ;
 But a' that's guid is wi' him carrit,
 For now he's dead !

Auld Killie, mourn in sable hue,
 The sad and dreary day ye'll rue ;
 Wha'll open nature to your view,
 And wisdom spread ?
 Sic men as G were but few,
 And now he's dead !

Wha will explain the circling year,
 And represent the rolling sphere ;
 Or mak' the solar system clear
 As ony bead ;
 J . . . G could, what need ye speer ?
 But now he's dead.

Though he gat little o' the school,
 He'd prove, by an unerring rule,
 That Newton was a frantic fool—
 A crazy head ;
 And soon had bred him muckle dool,
 But now he's dead !

He play'd an unco manfu' part,
 And had the gospel-cause at heart ;
 Recover'd it wi' toil and smart,
 A doughty deed ;
 And pure religion did revert,
 But now he's dead !

As mony a man has heard him tell,
 Ho hated bigotry like hell,
 Yet had a system by hinsel',
 Which was his creed :
 Frae modern arts he bore the bell,
 But now he's dead !

He was a man without a flaw ;
 In's life he never err'd at a ;

His ain opinion was the law,
 Withouten feed ;
 The world to him were madmen a',
 But now he's dead !"

Several amusing anecdotes are told of the philosopher and his scepticism. Happening to go into a bookseller's shop one day in Ayr, he met a clergyman of his acquaintance at the door. "What have *you* been doing here?" jocularly inquired Goldie. "Just buying a few ballads," retorted the minister, "to make psalms to your Bible."

At one period the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock was much alarmed by some strange occurrences at a farm-house named *Beanscraft*. During the night the most unearthly voices were heard, fire was seen, and the cattle, though ever so firmly bound to their stakes at night, were sure to be loose before morning, bellowing and goring each other; and yet the ropes did not appear to have been untied by mortal hand, but evidently parted without the appliance of force of any kind. This continued for several weeks, and no trace of any incendiary could be found. In short, it was believed by the people of the house and the country generally, that the Devil had obtained a commission to torment them. The tricks of the "Beanscraft Deil" were in every mouth, and the facts were frequently urged against Goldie's doctrine, as a proof that there was such a spirit in existence as the Prince of Darkness. The philosopher was so much annoyed on the subject, that he at last consented to go to Beanscraft, and confront the foul fiend to his face. Accompanied by the Rev. Mr Gillies of Kilmaurs, and Mr Robert Muir, wine-merchant, he accordingly set out for Beanscraft; and, on arriving, found the gudewife pouring very intently over the Bible, and her countenance betokening excess of grief. He demanded a sight of the ropes by which the cattle had been bound, and, after carefully examining them for a little, he said, "Ay, ay, I see—the Deil has na had muckle to do this while, I think; his whittle's been gey an sair rusted." He discovered that *aqua-fortis* had been applied to the rope; and this at once confirmed him in the belief that the whole was the trick of some malicious individual. According to his instructions a watch was placed over the premises at night; and sure enough the *Devil* was caught in the person of the farmer's son, who had resorted to this extraordinary method of frightening his father out of the farm, that he might obtain the lease! The fellow was so much affronted at the discovery, that he fled from Scotland; and, all remaining quiet in future at Beanscraft, the philosopher gained no small credit for his knowledge and penetration.

Mr Goldie was about five feet seven and a half inches in height, and uncommonly stout and well proportioned. The portrait taken from the original, painted by Mr Whitehead, an Edinburgh artist, is an admirable likeness. He was about seventy years of age at the time. In 1809, having occasion to be in Glasgow, the old man caught a severe cold by sleeping in a damp bed, which so much impaired his robust constitution, that, after lingering on a bed of sickness for about three weeks, he at length expired in the ninety-second year of his age. He retained his mental faculties to the last, firmly maintaining those sentiments in religion and philosophy, which had rendered his name, at least, so locally famous. He left a great many manuscripts, and letters from Burns and other men of celebrity with whom he communicated; but during the absence of his son, Lieutenant Goldie, who entered the navy in 1803, and returned on half-pay at the close of the war, all his papers had been made away with or destroyed. Amongst these was a letter from Lord Kames, which would have been regarded as a valuable relic at the present day.

WILLIAM PEEBLES, D.D.

THE REV. WILLIAM PEEBLES, upwards of forty years minister of the Newton parish, Ayr, was a poetical contemporary of Burns, and had the honour of being satirized both in the "Holy Fair" and the "Kirk's Alarm." In the first of these poems, he is alluded to as a preacher of much primness of manner:—

" In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrums;
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,*
Ascends the holy rostrum:
Sec, up he's got the word of God—
And meek and mim has view'd it."

In the latter, his poetical pretensions are scouted with all the coarseness which sometimes disfigures the wit of the Ploughman Bard:—

" Poet Willie, Poet Willie,
Gie the Doctor a volley
Wi' your liberty's chain an' your wit,†
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man," &c.

Dr Peebles was a native of Aberdeenshire. He was first engaged in the west country as an assistant at Dundonald. Though never what might be termed a great preacher, his discourses were always chaste in point of style and arrangement, and delivered with much emphasis and feeling. He had a very considerable turn for poetical composition. One of his earliest publications was a translation of "the *Davidicis* of Cowley, which some of his brethren, not exactly understanding what he meant, took the liberty of calling *Dr Peebles's Duft Ideas*."‡ The "Kirk's Alarm," by Burns, was written in 1789, as a satire on the clergy of Ayrshire, in reference to the case of Dr William M'Gill, one of the parochial ministers of Ayr, which created a great sensation at the time. As is well known, Dr M'Gill was charged with entertaining Socinian opinions, to which he had given publicity in a pamphlet, published in 1786, under the title of "A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ." In preaching a Centenary sermon on the Revolution in 1788, Dr Peebles openly denounced the pamphlet as heretical. This led to a printed reply on the part of Dr M'Gill; and the affair was shortly after taken up by the Presbytery, and next by the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. The case was ultimately settled amicably, M'Gill having apologized for the trouble he had occasioned, and declared his adherence to orthodox principles.

The pointed and biting sarcasm of Burns had no effect in cooling the poetical tem-

* The water of Ayr joins the sea at Ayr, and divides the new and the old towns. Hence the phrase, "frae the water-fit."

† This alludes to a poem by Peebles on the Centenary of the Revolution in which the following line, much ridiculed at the time, occurs:—

" And bound in *Liberty's* endearing chain."

‡ *Vide* Chambers's edition of Burns.

perament of the Rev. Doctor. In 1804, he published "The Crisis; or, the Progress of Revolutionary Principles," a poem, in three books, forming a thin octavo volume, dedicated to the late Earl of Eglinton, then Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Ayr. The country was at that period labouring under the dread of French Invasion; and the object of "The Crisis" was to rouse the patriotism of the people. The poem embraces an outline of the most impressive events connected with the atrocities of the French Revolution, and was well calculated to inspire a hatred of the reign of terror which succeeded the downfall of monarchy in France. Dr Peebles's next publication was a small volume of poems, consisting chiefly of odes and elegies, printed in Glasgow by R. Chapman in 1810. Besides these works, the reverend author published one or two volumes of sermons, which were pretty well received, especially amongst his congregation, by whom he was very generally esteemed.

Dr Peebles was, on the whole, neither indifferent as a poet nor a preacher; and every allowance must be made for the satire of Burns. He was regarded as a man of warm and amiable feelings; but, with advancing years, habits of parsimony gained upon him, and the credit due to his benevolence of sentiment was limited by the power which avarice exercised over him. Several anecdotes are told illustrative of his character in this respect; but we prefer recording an incident in his ministerial capacity, not generally known, highly creditable to his feelings. It occurred in his latter years; but even then he had lost none of that fire which sometimes animated his orations. The case was this:—A young woman belonging to his congregation had unfortunately erred; and, before receiving church privileges, she behoved to make amends by submitting to a public rebuke—for at that time the "repentance stool" was regarded as a most essential adjunct to discipline. Her lover, however, setting the influence of the Kirk-session at defiance, refused to apologize in any manner for *his* conduct; and to show his utter contempt, not only for the Church, but for the ruined girl who had listened to his false promises, he resolved to witness her contrition, and gloat over the blushes of her shame, by attending the church on the day of her rebuke. He accordingly took his seat—which was a front one—as usual; and when the poor girl stood up at the desire of the minister, he was seen to smile while he gazed on her abashed and downcast countenance. Peebles was observant of his unmanly conduct, and felt strongly excited by it. Turning from the "fair penitent," and fixing his eyes sternly on her deceiver, he addressed him in a voice of unusual sonorousness and power—"And you, J—R—, rise also; for though you have not come voluntarily forward to confess your transgression, you are nevertheless the more guilty of the two. I say, J—R—, stand up and be rebuked!" All eyes were instantly withdrawn from the young woman, and directed to the seat of the nonplussed and astonished Lothario, who, crestfallen, could have crept into a nutshell had it been possible. Again the minister repeated his command in a tone still more authoritative—the culprit looked round in despair—he would have fled, but the church was crowded, and no one seemed willing to make way for him. At length he rose, with a countenance so deeply flushed as to bespeak the mental torture under which he was suffering, and, to the evident satisfaction of the congregation, was made the object of one of the most severe castigations they had ever heard from the pulpit.

Dr Peebles died in October 1826.

JAMES HUMPHRY.

JAMES HUMPHRY, on whom Burns wrote the well-known epitaph—

“ Below thir stanes lie Jamie’s banes :
 Oh Death ! it’s my opinion,
 Thou ne’er took such a bleth’rin’ b-tch
 Into thy dark dominion ! ”—

is still living, though far advanced in years. After a long and laborious life, chequered by not a few misfortunes, James—for many years a widower, and his family grown up and settled in distant parts of the country—has at length found an abiding-place at Failford, near Mauchline, where a very neat range of buildings was erected a few years ago, in conformity with the will of the late Mr Smith of Smithston, who bequeathed a sum to be expended in the maintenance of a certain number of destitute aged people—one half from the parish of Mauchline, and the other from Tarbolton.

In early life, James was intimate with Burns, and indeed with the whole family. He was born at a place called Cairngillan, about half a mile from Tarbolton, and was of course extensively acquainted in the parish. Being a stone-mason to trade, he was frequently employed in that capacity both at Mosgiel and Lochlea. Possessed of a great flow of animal spirits, and a ready tongue, he was esteemed a very amusing sort of personage ; while his knowledge of books and taste for reading, vastly superior to the general mass of persons in his sphere of life at the time, recommended him to the particular notice of the Poet ; and they used to indulge in innumerable bantering discussions—the subject generally of a polemical character. One day Burns said to him—“ James, you that are a brother of the compass and square, can you tell me what like the Pyramids of Egypt are ? ” James felt rather puzzled how to couch his reply ; but, seldom at a loss for a ready answer, he immediately said—“ ’Deed, Robin, I think they’re shaped gay like your ain nose—broad at the bottom and narrow at the tap ! ” Burns laughed heartily at the homely solution of the problem, by which he hoped to puzzle his talkative friend.

The old man is rather proud than otherwise of the equivocal fame conferred on him by the lines of the Poet ; and he is vain enough to believe that the latter was provoked to retaliate in consequence of some satirical remarks made use of in one of their many conversations. Burns and he met one day in Mauchline, opposite “ Auld Nause Tinnock’s.” “ How’s a’ the day, Jamie ? ” said the Bard ; “ What’s the news ? ” “ O naething,” said Humphry, who had a short time before been reading *Don Quevedo’s Visions of Hell*, “ except frae the lower regions.” “ And what are they doing there ? ” said Burns. “ O,” continued Jamie, “ a Poet in Ayrshire’s sending mair souls to h-ll than the auld Deil has done since the creation ; and now they’re gaun to make the Poet the Chief o’ Devils. But as some of the black fraternity are for retaining their former ane, the tulzie between the twa factions is likely to be a dreich job.” To this sally Burns made no reply. According to Humphry, he was far from being well-pleased. The Poet had not at this period committed himself by the publication of his *Kilmarnock* edition ; but the “ Twa Herds,” the “ Holy Fair,” and one or two other poems of a similar character, had won their way to very general notice, and subjected the author to the utmost contumely as an irreverent and dangerous individual. He may on this

account have felt somewhat irritated at the rude wit of Humphry. The compliment, however, was repaid with interest; and the title of the "bleth'rin' b-tch" tenaciously adhered to James ever afterwards.

A contemporary poetess, Jean Murray of the Muir, attempted to wipe off the stigma in a sort of *per contra* to the lines of Burns; and James takes care to wind up his statement relative to the Poet, by reciting the kind effusion of Jean. It is as follows:—

“ See, Burns ca’s James a ‘bleth’rin’ b-tch,’
 Pretends he’s dead; there’s naething such!
 The man’s alive—possess’d o’ sense—
 Forbye weel bred, no scant o’ mense.
 I sometimes through the Firwood toddle
 To gather wit at his gray noddle;
 There, rhyming o’er my new-spun poetry,
 Scarehing for philosophy.
 There’s some ca’s Rab auld Allan’s heir,
 I winna let them rest wi’t there.
 I claim a kin to that famed man;
 My mither’s Ramsay, o’ the clan;
 Now, Robin, lie ye whare ye’re laid,
 I’ll contradict nae feek ye’ve said;
 But I could ne’er approve your plan,
 To abuse sae wise and good a man.”

Humphry had read a good deal; and, like many a half-informed person, believed he understood vastly more than he really did. Hence he often essayed to discuss subjects far beyond his comprehension, and his proneness to talk tended to confirm the opinion expressed of him by Burns. Poor Humphry, though an industrious, hard-working man, has been exceedingly unfortunate; yet, at the age of eighty-two, he retains no small degree of animal spirits, and appears happy. He was at one period a master builder, and had the mason-work at Catrine Mills; but the person with whom he was in company acted unfairly, and, to use his own words, he “lost £100 by him,” and was “diddled out of £50 more by the lawyers.”

HIC JACET WEE JOHNNIE.

“ Whoe’er thou art, oh reader, know,
 That Death has murder’d Johnnie!
 And here his body lies fu’ low—
 For saul he ne’er had ony.”

JOHN WILSON, printer of the first edition of Burns’s Poems, on whom the Poet composed the above satirical lines, in consequence, it is said, of his refusal to venture on a second edition without security, was, notwithstanding the penurious timidity ascribed to him by the offended Bard, a much esteemed and respectable individual. Burns was at the time on the eve of leaving Scotland, and his circumstances were altogether such as to inspire no great faith in his pecuniary resources; while the odium attached to his works, as immoral and heterodox, were reasons sufficiently weighty to influence any business man of common prudence. We therefore see no reason why Wilson should

be blamed, as he has frequently been, for his conduct towards Burns. He deserves no great credit for discrimination, however, having afterwards lost a considerable sum in the exercise of an ill-judged liberality on far less deserving authors, who, prompted by the success of Burns, were ambitious to follow in his wake. Wilson was a native of Kilmarnock, where his father kept a small shop, though it might be considered large at that time, for the disposal of general merchandise, in the Fore Street, then the principal thoroughfare. There were two brothers in the bookselling trade, John and Peter. The latter was established in business in Ayr, and the former in Kilmarnock. Though careful and generally secure in their dealings, they were nevertheless active and enterprising in disposition; and to their united efforts the county is indebted for the first newspaper it possessed. "The Air Advertiser," of which they were the original publishers, was begun in 1803. Though the only newspaper in a populous and extensive district, it was but indifferently patronised for some time, and, it is said, the projectors were more than once on the eve of abandoning it altogether. The speculation, however, ultimately became a paying one, in so much that the Wilsons realized a handsome fortune; and the *Advertiser* still continues to be a profitable concern, though, as there are now two other journals in Ayrshire, it no longer possesses a monopoly. On the death of his brother Peter, John Wilson removed from Kilmarnock to Ayr, when the newspaper firm was changed to "Wilson & Paul," the Rev. H. Paul (of whom a short sketch has already been given) having entered into partnership, and conducted the journal for some time. John Wilson died on the 6th May 1821, leaving a widow, but no children. He was of very small stature, but active and genteel in appearance.

JOHN BLACK, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE FALLS OF CLYDE," "LIFE OF TASSO," &c.

DR BLACK was not a native of Ayrshire; but his connexion with the county, as minister of the parish of Coylton, perhaps entitles him to notice in a work of this description. He was born at Douglas, in Lanarkshire, about the year 1777. While a student, and after he became probationer, several years of his life were passed as a private tutor, in which capacity he was for some time employed in the family of Mr Hamilton of Sundrum, in Ayrshire, through whose influence he obtained the cure of the parish of Coylton. Soon after his settlement there, the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by the University of Glasgow.

Dr Black was early distinguished for his love of learning and fame, and he made great progress in his scholastic acquirements. As a linguist, he had few superiors. His poem, the "Falls of Clyde; or the Fairies," was a juvenile conception, though it remained unpublished till 1806. It would have been well for his fame, probably, that it had never seen the light. Written in the Scottish dialect, it is, in point of dialogue, a very unworthy imitation of the "Gentle Shepherd," while the plot and incident are ill imagined and by no means well executed. The story consists in the theft of the Laird of Bonniton's infant daughter by the fairies—her concealment in a cavern at the Falls of the Clyde—and her rescue from thralldom by her lover on the eventful eve

when, according to Fairy law, no human effort could afterwards have saved her. With the exception of some of the stanzas put into the mouths of her supernatural captors, which are pretty enough, the poem presents few redeeming lines. The following are no doubt a favourable specimen :—

“ Should one bred in a cave, in gloom and night,
 Be brought transported to the cheerfu’ light,
 How would he gaze ! an’ think he’d never tire,
 To wander round, to view, and to admire :
 The golden sun, the lovely azure sky,
 The earth, the sea, would all transport his eye ;
 How would the flowers, the birds, the scented breeze,
 Delight when whispering through the blossom’d trees ?
 Yet custom makes us without transport view,
 The *Palace of the world*.”

The pastoral, however, was prefaced by a learned dissertation on *Fairies*, the *Scottish Language*, and *Pastoral Poetry*, the length of which, and the number of quotations pressed into it, though creditable to the talent and research of the author, were altogether out of proportion to the length or importance of the poem. When the work appeared, it was severely criticised by the reviewers ; and the reception it experienced is understood to have made a deep and lasting impression on the author’s mind.

The *Life of Tasso*, a work of a very different character, was, on the contrary, so well received, that it was speedily translated into several Continental languages, and highly eulogised in the land of the Poet’s birth. In the appendix, he gave an account of the Admirable Crichton, so depreciatory of the reputed character of that extraordinary individual, that Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee, with whom the author was in correspondence at the time, is supposed to have been prompted to undertake a biography of Crichton, which he published in 1814, in every respect the antipodes of that given in the *Life of Tasso*.

Dr Black died in Paris, on the 26th of August 1825, of an inflammatory disease. By those who were intimate with him, he is described as having been a perfect recluse amongst his books. Previous to his death, he was engaged in a work on the genius and poetry of Homer. “ Of very considerable talents, imagination, and peculiarly pleasing in conversation, a poetical feeling pervaded all his writings ; but though discriminating, his judgment in literary matters was not always to be trusted. He was scarcely known beyond his parish as a preacher, and had little desire to shine in his pulpit orations. They were, notwithstanding, generally effective and original. His private character was estimable. Sober, temperate, chaste, and delicate, yet he could occasionally unbend in socialty. He had a fund of wit and anecdote, greatly enhanced by the natural simplicity of his character.” *

* Obituary notice in the *Ayr Courier*.

BUCHANITES.

“ UPON the death of Mr Jack, the first Relief minister of Irvine, that congregation made choice of Mr Whyte to be his successor. Mr Whyte being called to assist at a sacrament in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, Mrs Buchan had an opportunity of hearing him preach, and, captivated by his oratory, she communicated to him by letter the flattering account of his being the first minister who as yet had spoken effectually to her heart, expressing at the same time a desire of visiting him at Irvine, that she might farther be confirmed in the faith.

“ This letter he showed to some of his people, who gave her a very welcome reception; and, from her heavenly conversation and extraordinary gifts, they began to consider her a very valuable acquisition to their party. Religion was the constant topic of her conversation. In all companies and upon all occasions she introduced it. Her time was wholly employed in visiting from house to house, in making family worship, solving doubts, answering questions, and in expounding the Scriptures. Some of the congregation began to entertain doubts of the orthodoxy of her principles, all of which had been implicitly imbibed by her minister. They expressed their dissatisfaction at his ministry, and desired him to dismiss her as a dangerous person. He refused to comply with their request. They threatened to libel him. He remained firm to her interest, and in this he was supported by some of the most wealthy of his hearers. They drew up a paper containing what they supposed were her principles and his, and desired him to declare whether these were his principles. He acknowledged that they were, and readily subscribed them as such. They carried the matter before the Presbytery, who thought proper to depose him from his office of the ministry. He returned to Irvine, accompanied by his adherents, delivered up the keys of the church, preached for some time in a tent, and afterwards in his own house.

“ The curiosity of the public was excited, and many frequented his meetings. Strange accounts were given of their doctrine and manner of worship. They usually met in the night-time, and were instructed by their pretended prophetess. She gave herself out to be the woman spoken of in the 12th chapter of the Revelation, and that Mr Whyte was the man-child she had brought forth. This, and some other ravings which she uttered, drew upon her and her party the indignation of the populace. Idle people assembled at different times in a tumultuous manner, surrounded the house, broke the windows and furniture, and would have proceeded to greater extremities had it not been for the interposition of the magistrates. After repeated applications from different members of the Relief congregation, to have her apprehended and proceeded against as a blasphemer, the magistrates thought it prudent to dismiss her from the place, which was accordingly done in May 1784.

“ To protect the woman from insult, they conducted her about a mile out of town; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, she was grossly insulted by the mob, thrown into ditches, and otherwise ill-used by the way. She took up her residence with some of her followers in the neighbourhood of Kilmaurs, and, being joined by Mr Whyte and others in the morning, the whole company, about forty in number, proceeded on their way to Mauchline, and from thence to Cumnock, and to Closeburn, in Dumfries-shire, singing as they went, and saying they were going to the New Jerusalem.”—*Statistical Account of Scotland, 1793.*

Several old people still remember having seen the Buchanites on their way to the New Jerusalem. Mrs Buchan, attired in a scarlet cloak—which was then fashionable—together with the discarded minister, and one or two of the higher order of her dupes, were seated in a cart, while the remainder of the company followed on foot. The people on the roads as they passed were greatly astonished at the strangeness of the spectacle. The deluded fanatics settled on a farm in the parish of Closeburn, to which was given the name of *Buchan-Ha'*. Like the Essenes of ancient, and the Socialists of modern, times, the Buchanites adopted the principle of a community of goods—every thing was

held in common amongst them. One of the leading novelties by which she drew so many followers around her was, that they should be carried to heaven without tasting death. It is astonishing how long she contrived to cherish a belief in the certainty of this event. She frequently led them to the top of a rising ground in the neighbourhood, where the most solemn preparations and ceremonies were performed in the expectation of being caught up into heaven; but, often as they were disappointed, still some excuse or other served to keep alive the extraordinary spirit of faith created in her adherents. John M'Taggart, in his Gallovidian Encyclopedia, states, that "at long and length the glorious day arrived on which they were to be taken to the regions above, where endless happiness existed, and pleasure for evermore. Platforms were erected for them to wait on, until the wonderful hour arrived; and Mrs Buchan's platform was exalted above all the others. The hair of ilka head was cut short, all but a tuft on the top, for the angels to catch by when drawing them up. The momentous hour came. Every station for ascension was instantly occupied. Thus they stood, expecting to be wafted every moment into the land of bliss, when a gust of wind came; but, instead of wafting them upwards, it capsized Mrs Buchan, platform and all! After this unexpected downcome," continues John, "she fell into disgrace by her leaders, and her words had not so much weight with them; still, however, a great number clung by her. One night, she having been ailing for some time before, a fit came on her, out of which she never recovered; but her disciples, thinking it to be a trance into which she had fallen, expected her to awake. No sign of this appearing, and her body beginning to have a putrid smell, they thought it prudent to bury it in the earth beside the house; and by her have been laid all those of her sect who have since died." Honest John M'Taggart is no doubt inclined to burlesque, and the platform and the tuft of hair may not be strictly in accordance with fact; but it is certain that the repeated failures experienced in their attempts at ascension, at length began to weaken the confidence of several of her followers; and, especially as the finances diminished, not a few began to forsake the community. When she became ill, she endeavoured still to cheer the drooping spirits of those who remained faithful, by asserting that although she might die to all human appearance, yet they were not to inter her corpse, because she would assuredly come alive again, and carry them to heaven. So firmly were her adherents persuaded of the fulfilment of this prediction, that they kept the dead body until the inhabitants in the neighbourhood interfered, and compelled the interment of her remains. As marriage was strictly forbidden among the party, death and desertion soon thinned the community; still a number of them remained steadily together, and some time after the death of their leader, they removed from Closeburn to a place in Galloway called *Crooked-Ford*, a few miles west of Dumfries. One of this singular sect still survives. His name is Andrew Innes, and he is now upwards of eighty years of age. The Buchanites were remarkably peaceable and industrious, and greatly famed for the manufacture of spinning-wheels and check-reels, formerly to be found in every cottage, but now almost entirely superseded by the spinning-jennies of the great steam factories.

Mrs Buchan, born near Banff in 1733, was the wife of a potter in Glasgow, or its neighbourhood. She appears to have been a woman of very little education, but of considerable natural ability. The following letter, in her own handwriting, is copied verbatim from the original:—

"My vere well-beloved sisters in Jesus Christ, and in God your Father and my

Father. O! my dear sisters, you have bene at a great lose for want of the Briead of Life, the words of God, spoake by the Spirit of God, which is spirit and life. O! great and precious is the mistreyes of Godlenes that has bene revealed among us since you left us. But had I knowen, when parting with you, that the seperation would have had continued to be so long, I do not thinke that I would have consented to it on anye account; but I must waren you, my dear sisters, in the name of God your Father and his Sone Jesus Christ, that you come out of that place and be sepatat. O! my dear sisters and beloved children, you are keping us as it wer in bondage. O! dou it no longer. We have stayed in this place, and have beain thankfeoul to geat live to stay on your account, till we be joined never to pairt more. And the popel heare has been more than ordenary for atantion to hear and belive the truths as they are reviled by our beloved and most faithful leader. Indeed, I can say on good ground, that his grouth in displaying the mistrey of God's will and mind to sant and siner is astonishing. And now, my dear Janet, I chieafuley aenolodge that I am much bound in love to you; and maney great actes of kindnes have I had from you, and there is none of them forgotten, but they are all on record in heaven and in my mind, while I so-juren hear on earth. But we can have no reast till you be joined with us. O! that you would concidder that he that will com shall com, and will not tarey. The popel hear, some of them sies and firmeley belives, that we are the children of God, and would joine us chierfuley, but the Devil and the world, and espesealey the clargey, is become so uneasy, theat it apears that this place will not be abel to bear us much longer; so we desire you to make all spead and leat us be joined in one in all things; and, indeed, I rather see you hear then ten thousand leatters from you; for I all most can not writ, for this is not a time for writ, but speaking face to face. We have thought it fit to send the bearer to speake face to face with you, and he will inform you of things as they are. We are all well in our loat and portion, being God who has sepatat us from a world laying in wickednes; but our souls are wired because of murders. Now, I beche you, com out from amon them, and be ye sepatat; and I am shoure I long to see you bothe hear. My well-beloved and dear sisters, and my dear freand and all his follours, joins me in the same mind; so I conclud that we all firmeley belive theat the God of peace shall bruis Satan under our feet shoartley. Fear-you-well on peaper, your faithful frind in Christ,

ELSPAT BUCHAN.

Pos.—Beloved Sir, we recaved your letter this morning, and was hapey to hear that you and the rest of owr dear frinds was in health; but, dear frind, your self would have bean far more axeceptabel. You are at a great lose in being abesend from the bread and watter of life. O! what misrey it is to be intangled with this bewitching world. O! I charge you, in the name and by the command of God, that you come out from among them, and be ye sepatat; for he that will come shall come, and will not tarey. I have maney things to say to you, but have no pleasure in writing, for I long to see you face to face. Your wife and the two children are weall, and longs to see you. Our dearley beloved and most faithful shiperd has his most kind love to you, and wonders at your long abesance. What if you be detining the Lord's work! Thir could no destruction come on Sodom, till Lot was gon out of it. Give our most indiring love to Mr and Mrs Garven, and to Mrs Young; and I can give them no advise but what I have given them befor, and what I have given you on this peaper, except I sead you face to face. The bearer will in form you of other matters. Love, marcey, and peace, in God, be inenfest through Jesus Christ in and on you all. From your faithfull frind in Christ,

ELSPAT BUCHAN."

The above letter bears no date of any kind; but, from one or two others we have seen, written by her followers evidently about the same period, it is likely to have emanated from "New Camp," as they designated their settlement at Closeburn, in 1785. From the contents of the letter, Elspat appears to have shared the honour of leadership, at least nominally, with the Rev. Mr Whyte. Mrs Buchan died in May 1791.

REV. DAVID LANDBOROUGH,

OF STEVENSTON.

AYRSHIRE has no claim to the author of "Arran, a Poem," beyond that of residence. He was born in the parish of Dalry, in the Glenkens of Galloway, a district celebrated alike for its rural beauty, its educational institutions, and as the birthplace of Lowe, Gillespie, Paterson, &c. His parents were of humble life, but highly respectable in their sphere; and, though possessed of limited means, nobly exemplified the characteristic virtue of the Scottish peasant, in affording every facility within their power to the scholastic advancement of their son.

After several years attendance at the schools of his native district—the excellence of which are well known—and afterwards at Dumfries, under Gray, Kennedy, and White, young Landsborough studied at the University of Edinburgh, and, before finishing his classes, became tutor in the family of Lord Glenlee, to whose patronage he was much indebted. He was appointed to the parish of Stevenston in 1811, where he still continues, greatly esteemed, both professionally and privately, by all who know him.

Mr Landsborough married a Miss M'Leish of Port-Glasgow, an excellent lady, but of delicate health—a circumstance to which we owe the valuable poem on Arran. Having a daily view of the peaks and glens of that romantic island from the manse, he was induced to repair thither, on more than one occasion, with Mrs Landsborough, for the benefit of a change of air; and, in gratitude for the happy effects on the health of his beloved partner, he was led to write the poem in question. Fond of the study of nature generally, he had ample opportunity of indulging his taste in the rich mineral, conchological, geological, and botanical stores of the island.

We are not aware that Mr Landsborough has given publicity to any other "wooings of the muse" than the poem already alluded to. The pages of the *Scottish Christian Herald*, however, are frequently graced with poetical scraps from his pen; and the account of the parish of Stevenston, in the New Statistical Account of Scotland—one of the most interesting in that important work—sufficiently attests his research and ability as a writer.

The poem of Arran was well received, and is now, we believe, out of print. Though not entitled perhaps to take its place amongst the highest flights of genius, the poem has earned for its author a name which his country will always be proud to acknowledge. We quote the following lines from the first canto:—

“ And thou, majestic Arran! dearest far
Of all the isles, on which the setting sun
In golden glory smiles; queen of the west,
And daughter of the waves! there art thou too,
Rearing aloft thy proud aerial brow,
Claiming the homage of admiring lands,
O'er a wide range of tributary shores.

Thee much I love; partly, I wot, because
I've oft explored thy glens and tangled brakes,
Where ev'ry bank blooms with the primrose pale,

And drooping hyacinth : or where amidst
Her ensiform leaves, on stately stem,
Sweet *epipactis*, rarest of thy plants,
Builds up her pyramid of snowy gems.

These much I love ; because I've often climb'd
Thy mountains brown and scaled their towering peaks,
Where high 'midst rocky battlements sublime,
Flora conceals from reach of vulgar gaze
The loveliest of her fair, but fleeting race,—
And whence, in panoramic view, beheld
Far as the eye can reach are Scotia's isles,
And intervening seas, and mountains blue,
And fertile vales, far as Edina's towers.
Whence, too, are seen, in varied shades and hues,
Eirin's green shores, and Mona's distant hills,
And merry England's coast, like summer clouds,
Softly commingling with the azure sky.

These much I love ; because in roaming through
Thy scenery wild, healthy—I healthier felt ;
Breathing the air which breathes the hardy Gael,
I seem'd t' inhale part of that Gaelic fire,
Which, kindling 'midst the thunderbolts of war,
Nerves his dread arm, and prompts his fearless heart
To deeds of more than Greek or Roman fame :—
Or, when the sound of war is heard no more,
Gleams in his glist'ning eye, 'mid distant lands,
At thought of kindred, and of Highland home.

But dearer art thou far, beloved land !
Because when to thy shores I trembling bore
Her whom I value more than all the wealth
Which wealthiest lands or richest seas can yield ;
Though pale as Parian marble was her cheek,
Feeble her pulse, and sunk her languid eye ;—
Soon did her eye rekindle ; soon her pulse
Returning health proclaim'd ; while o'er her cheek
Life woke afresh the lovely hues of youth ;
And soon my anxious fears were put to flight
By gladdening hopes and glowing gratitude."

The picture of a Sabbath morning in Arran is beautiful :—

" With cheerful light shone forth the smiling sun,
When came the Sabbath morn of holy rest.
All Nature rested on that blessed morn ;
Not with the listlessness of torpid sloth,
But beaming peace, as if that morn restored
Part of that joy which brighten'd Nature's face
When the Creator cast upon his works
A look benignant, and pronounced them good.
Rested the sea ;—yet did the sea proclaim
Her tranquil bliss, as she return'd the smile
Diffused on her from Heaven's propitious eye.
Rested the winds ; and yet the zephyrs bland
Whisper'd their happiness in accents sweet ;

Or held soft converse with the peaceful waves
 Which play'd in gentlest rippings on the shore.
 Rested the fleecy clouds on mountain tops ;—
 And yet the clouds prepared to fade away,
 And leave in spotless purity the sky.
 Rested the village neat ; and all around
 The humble house of God was calm repose,
 The sweet tranquillity of Sabbath morn."

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ADDITIONAL NOTICE OF GAVIN TURNBULL.

THE sketch of Turnbull was at press when our attention was directed to vol. ii. of the "Weaver's Magazine," published at Paisley in 1819, in which, under the head of "Biographical Sketches of Alexander Wilson," (the ornithologist,) the following notice of the Poet occurs:—

"With Gavin Turnbull, another young author who sometimes visited Wilson, I was well acquainted. The volume of poems which he published, I received from his own hand, which is still in my possession. It consists mostly of poems of the elegiac or melancholy cast; songs, and a few pieces in the Scottish dialect of the humorous kind. The account which this young man gave of himself to me was, that he was born in one of the border counties washed by the Tweed; that in early life he had received the rudiments of a classical education; and that his parents had at one time been in decent circumstances, but by misfortune had been reduced, by which the intention they had of making him a scholar had been relinquished; and, necessity urging, they had bound him apprentice to the trade of a weaver. In following this employment, he took up his residence in the town of Kilmarnock, where he devoted a great deal of his attention to the writing of poetry, and also encouraged by the success of Burns, he commenced author. A few of his poems are of the descriptive kind, and the scenery is sometimes laid on the pastoral banks of the Tweed, and at other times on the beautiful margin of Irvine Water. In his poem, entitled 'Vicissitudes of Fortune,' he narrates, with an air of melancholy, some of the circumstances of his early life, and the changes that had taken place in his worldly prospects, from which narrative he draws the following mournful reflection:—

'But, ah! how vain are human schemes;
Illusive visions, empty dreams,
Which, when we grasp, our hope's betray'd;
We lose the substance for the shade.'

When I became first acquainted with Turnbull, he was, like his friend Wilson, involved in pecuniary difficulties, owing in a great measure to his having neglected to prosecute with diligence the mechanical employment which he had been taught, devoting so much of his time and attention to writing verses, and to his having become inconsiderately an unsuccessful author. When he made his occasional visits to Paisley, I had often an opportunity of conversing with him; and when at a distance, he was sometimes my correspondent. He was a well informed young man, had read a great deal of poetry, and was particularly fond of Shenstone, of whose elegies and pastorals he was a successful imitator; and he had a very correct judgment in criticising the poetical compositions of others. Like our late townsman, Tannahill, he had a happy talent for song-writing. His poetical genius introduced him to the acquaintance of Burns, who ranked him among his friends; and in his correspondence with Mr Thomson, he thus makes honourable mention of him:—'Turnbull, by the by, has a great many songs in manuscript, which I can command. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favour, but I like some of his pieces very much.' And Mr Thomson, in return, thus writes:—'Your friend Turnbull's songs have considerable merit, and as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you will find some that will answer.' This young Poet, by his devotedness to his favourite pursuit, got into an unsettled mode of life, entered on the stage, and soon afterwards married one of the actresses. The last time I ever saw him, I think was on the streets of Glasgow, some time during 1792, when he was passing along with a number of the theatrical party, when I had a short conversation with him, and bade him a kind adieu. I have been informed, that, like his friend Wilson, he afterwards went to America; but

as to the particulars of his emigration, or his future destiny in the New World, I have never been informed."

Thus it appears Turnbull was not born in Ayrshire, a point regarding which we had no positive information. He must have been a mere youth, however, when his father settled in Kilmarnock; and we have his own authority for the statement, that it was there he first wooed the Muse. The "Biographical Sketches of Alexander Wilson," from which the foregoing is quoted, written in the form of a series of letters to a young friend, under the signature of SENEX, were, after appearing in the "Weaver's Magazine," thrown off as a separate volume, for private circulation. The writer, Mr Thomas Crichton, master of the Town's Hospital, Paisley, a respectable and intelligent octogenarian, still survives. Mr Crichton was intimately acquainted with Wilson; and his little work may be regarded as an affectionate and interesting tribute to the memory of his early friend.

THE END.

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